COLLEGE VOLUNTARY STUDY COURSES

The Faiths of Mankind

EDMUND DAVISON SOPER

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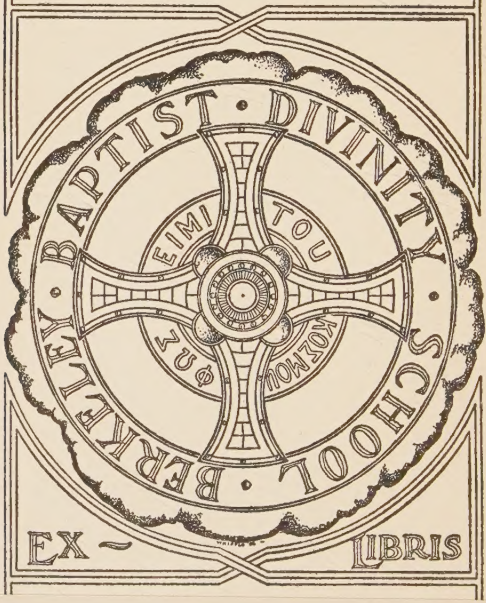

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THE FAITHS OF MANKIND

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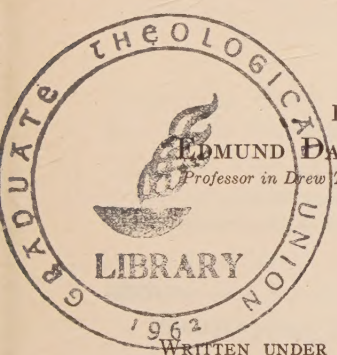

By
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COLLEGE VOLUNTARY STUDY COURSES

"The Faiths of Mankind" takes sixth place in a series of text-books known as College Voluntary Study Courses. The general outline for this curriculum has been prepared by the Committee on Voluntary Study of the Council of North American Student Movements, representing the Student Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations and the Student Volunteer Movement, and the Sub-Committee on College Courses of the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations, representing twenty-nine communions. Therefore the text-books are planned for the use of student classes in the Sunday school, as well as for the supplementary groups on the campus. The present text-book has been written under the direction of these Committees.

The text-books are not suitable for use in the academic curriculum, as they have been definitely planned for voluntary study groups.

This series, covering four years, is designed to form a minimum curriculum for the voluntary study of the Bible, foreign missions, and North American problems. Daily Bible Readings are printed with each text-book. The student viewpoint is given first emphasis—what are the student interests? what are the student problems?

INTRODUCTION

This book is intended for those who have never made a study of the religions of the world. The purpose has been to present the various religions in such a manner as to create intelligent and sympathetic interest in every form of religion. The attempt to make this volume conform to the other volumes of this series has been by no means easy. This has been felt in three particulars.

1. The need of daily Bible readings has been recognized and they have been provided, but they are of necessity very short. The fact that in each case they deal with some phase of the religion under consideration should count for something in making up the loss of a more extended reading.

2. The division of the book into twelve chapters of about equal length has rather arbitrarily determined the number of religions treated. When in four cases two chapters have been given to a single religion the limitation is the more evident. It was quite obvious that only living religions should be included, but when living faiths like Zoroastrianism and Jainism are excluded the drawback of the method is very apparent.

3. More difficult has been the effort to make possible a correct and adequate acquaintance with the religions presented. Much has had to be omitted which is necessary to a full understanding of the religions. Almost no references have been made to religious literature and very few to the cults. The aim has been to convey as clearly as possible the meaning of these religions to their adherents, and to point out their effects on life and character. The religions have been presented in their historical devlopment as the only method, even in a brief sketch, of understanding their significance.

The need of an introductory chapter has been keenly felt, in which the proper attitude of those who are Christians toward adherents of other faiths might be shown. It is hoped that the spirit of the book and the method used will make clear what is not thus formally stated. The writer can only say here that while he is firmly convinced of the uniqueness of Christianity and looks upon it as the final faith, he cannot but feel that in every religion men have been trying to find the true God and are reaching out after Him who "by divers portions and in divers manners" has manifested Himself to men of all faiths. Realizing this, the only attitude of a Christian is that of sympathy—a sympathy the more deep and full of pity that the need of Jesus Christ is so universally present.

(For every subject dealt with in this volume the great mine of information is "The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics," edited by James Hastings, the articles in which are contributed by authorities on the various subjects treated.)

CHAPTER I

WHERE FEAR HOLDS SWAY

Where shall we begin in this study of the faiths of mankind? Shall it be with the more developed faiths, like Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity? Why not begin with religion in its simpler forms, religion as found among the savage or uncivilized peoples of the world? The religion of the primitive peoples is largely a religion of fear. It will prove helpful before studying primitive religion itself to discover the attitude toward fear taken by Hebrew and Christian writers in the Bible.

Daily Readings

First Day: Is it true that fear and dread destroy the happiness of many of the men and women you know? Looking at the surface facts this seems to be a pretty strong assumption. But can we judge by what we ordinarily see and hear? Joy cannot be hidden, but fear can. Were we to know what is going on in the inner hearts of men, what a revelation it would be! We might find many whose experience would match that of Job:

> Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
> And life unto the bitter in soul;
> Who long for death, but it cometh not,
> And dig for it more than for hid treasures? . . .
> For the thing which I fear cometh upon me,
> And that which I am afraid of cometh unto me.
> I am not at ease, neither am I quiet, neither have I rest;
> But trouble cometh.—Job 3:20, 21, 25, 26.

If such experiences are to be found among ourselves, what

must be those of the crude backward peoples, whose gods are unfriendly and malevolent?

SECOND DAY: Fear disqualifies a man for constructive work. What can you do with a terrified man? Nothing until he is pacified and calmed. Even where lesser fears prevail, such as dread and anxiety, usefulness is curtailed. What is needed? Is it not confidence and courage, like that Joshua was told to have?

> Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.—Josh. 1:9.

Such courage comes to a Christian through confidence in God and his protection. To him God is good. Many a man in the worst kind of trouble has been able to repeat the reassuring words, "The eternal God is thy dwelling-place, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27). What would it mean to you to have this invincible confidence in God's goodness?

THIRD DAY: There is another and deeper kind of fear which comes to men—that caused by a troubled conscience. Can peace come and the fine flowers of character grow, with this unhealed sore in the life? Notice the contrasts of peace and distress in Psalm 32:

> Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
> Whose sin is covered.
> Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,
> And in whose spirit there is no guile. . . .
> I acknowledged my sin unto thee,
> And mine iniquity did I not hide:
> I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah;
> And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.—Psalm 32:1, 2, 5.

In the New Testament the terribleness of sin is, if possible, intensified. Could any one except a man who had

known the terrors of a troubled conscience have written that vivid verse, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10: 31)? Is a man justified in being afraid if he has a bad conscience?

FOURTH DAY: One of the great words in the Bible is "Fear not." The place of fear is to be taken by peace. What is peace? Can we not look on it as a kind of atmosphere in which everything good can grow? Here is an idyllic picture of the "good day coming" when peace shall reign.

> And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lié down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. . . . For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. Isa. 11:6, 9.

Can you see even through the thick clouds of the world war the possibility of a day like that? And for us as individuals today we have Jesus' word, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful" (John 14: 27). John goes a step farther.

> There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love.—I John 4: 18.

What kind of love is it that can exterminate fear? Where does it begin?

FIFTH DAY: There is a fear which is quite different: it is the fear which is synonymous with awe and reverence, respect for rightful authority, deference. Consider how different your attitude is when possessed by this kind of fear. It actually ceases to be fear in the ordinary sense. "Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father" (Lev. 19:3), surely points to a very different experience from that of fear in the previous readings. "Honor all men. Love the

brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Peter 2:17). What does fear mean in these two verses?

SIXTH DAY: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). What place should respect and reverence play in life? Could the state continue to exist without respect for law and constituted authority? Can a friendship be strong and wholesome unless based on respect and reverence? Can individual character be built on any foundation but that of self-respect? With these questions in mind, consider how the fear of Jehovah may be said to underlie all these other kinds of fear. Read the account of Isaiah's call. What was his attitude in God's presence? To what did it lead?

> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.
>
> Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.—Isa. 6:1-8.

SEVENTH DAY: Listen to the song of adoration in the closing book of the Bible.

> Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.—Rev. 15:3, 4.

Why were the worshipers to be in fear of God? Should our attitude be any different now? What effect should such an attitude of reverence for God and all His creation have upon our daily conduct?

In all this we have the example of Jesus Christ Himself. Are we not to follow "in His train"?

> Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation.—Heb. 5:7-9.

Study for the Week

I

All primitive peoples have some form of religion. Their religion may be a dance more than a belief, it may have more to do with their heels than with their heads, but for all that it is religion. We start with a religion very simple, very naive, very crude, but still a real religion.

Who are these primitive peoples? They are the Indians of North and South America, the Eskimos, the Negroes of Central and South Africa, the peoples of the South Sea Islands (including the great islands of New Guinea, Borneo, Sumatra, and the Philippines), the black men of Australia, and the aboriginal tribes of Japan, China, and India. Not only do they live in widely scattered areas; they are not inconsiderable in numbers, even though the population is not

dense in any one place. Their very mode of living makes it impossible for them to remain in large groups. One recent estimate gives their number at about 157,000,000, another 173,000,000. There is one other reason for the study of the religion of these people. When we describe their religion we are describing the religion of our own savage forefathers, who roamed the forests and plains of Northern Europe. For the religion of all primitive peoples is essentially the same.

II

What kind of being is a primitive or savage man? He is like us and yet he is not. He looks out on the same universe, yet he looks at it differently. We see the same thing in our homes. We all live in the same environment, but it is a very different world to the little children from what it is to us. A child lives in fairyland. "Alice in Wonderland" is just as real as tables and chairs. It would be no more wonderful to see a shoe turn into a real live grinning monkey than to watch a willow stick made into a whistle. To him anything might be anything else just as easily as be what it is. Now a savage is very much like a child. He has a man's body, developed and strong, and a man's experience in many respects like our own, but with a child's outlook and way of thinking about the world. The chief difference is that the savage is mature physically, has picked up a lot of useful information, and is expert in forest and animal lore. With all this, however, he has retained the same naive attitude toward nature and the inner world of his own life. He seems to have but one method of explaining what happens, and that is by referring it to the way he makes things happen. If the wind blows, some one must be blowing or letting the winds out of a bag. He carries this out to the last detail, until his universe is filled with spirits. He never asks, what caused my toothache, but always *who* caused it? He is an "animist." He lives in a world that is alive.

He reasons this way all unconsciously to himself. He has

never investigated his mental processes. True, he cannot see the spirits which surround him, but they are very real to him. He thinks he does see them at times, on dark nights and in secluded places, and he has countless ghost stories. We hear them told even among ourselves, showing that we have not gone as far as we think from the animistic way of looking at things.

But why does he think he sees ghosts and how can he believe in so many spirits, which are for the most part invisible? It is scarcely possible to escape the conclusion that he came to believe in spirits through the experience of dreams and through the coming of death into his family. In dreams he wanders over the universe. No bound can be set to his travels. He does it all in a few moments. To him it is all just as real as eating and drinking. But he has learned from what others say that while he was out on his wonderful journey his body was just where he lay down and where he found himself when he waked up. A spirit then can leave its body and journey anywhere, disembodied and invisible. Death also is hard to understand. It is very much like sleep to him, but why does not the spirit come back as it has done so often before? This is the mystery to him, and it becomes all the more mysterious and horrible when the body begins to decay and to grow repulsive. He lives in a world which he cannot understand. It is full of spirits and spiritual influences which can do what he cannot. He is in a very real sense helpless before them.

III

This primitive man is religious. The animism we have been describing is not his religion, but it is very close to it. The spirits or gods he worships are the spirits of his animism. In what sense can they be called gods or deities? Probably in no deeper sense than that they are stronger and more cunning than he is, and that he must have dealings with them. In Japan the earliest term for gods was *Kami,*

which means "something above." Anything that is higher or stronger or more cunning than I am may be a Kami.

All the greater objects of nature have thus served as gods. The ocean, the mountains, the clouds, the dawn, the stars, the moon, and the sun all have been looked upon as divinities and have been worshiped. The Ipurinas of Brazil speak of the sun as "our Father," and think of him as a little old man, who was their progenitor and still cares for his children. It would not be so hard to understand how men should worship the greater and grander aspects of nature. We think of them as uplifting and purifying, as they stand out in their isolated grandeur. But primitive peoples are not able to read into their interpretation what we have learned from other sources.

The strange thing is that the savage prefers other deities. The lesser powers of nature fascinate him. The spirits in trees, springs, streams, rocks, caves, and dark recesses are deified to a far greater extent than are the stars. Certain stones are sacred to the Zulus, because their ancestors are said to have emerged from one such stone split in two. How does it happen that one object is chosen rather than another to be worshiped? In all probability, the savage to whom you might put this question could not answer. He does just as his fathers did, and that is all he knows about it. But there must be some reason. It is in all likelihood because of something strange or awesome or uncanny about it. This doubtless accounts for the reverence given certain animals like the snake, whose worship is very widespread indeed. The very aversion man has for a snake would lead a savage to consider it as out of the ordinary.

In many parts of the world another form of worship is found—the worship of ancestors. Fathers and grandfathers especially are held in reverence and have offerings made to them when they have died. When a man dies, his spirit, going into a new and unknown realm, becomes mysterious and hence stronger and more to be feared than when embodied here among his fellows. He can now do harm or

possibly ward off danger from his descendants, according to the treatment offered him. His spirit is not very far away and takes note of all that is happening. The worship, then, that is offered springs not only out of the respect which the memory of one of their own departed ones would inspire, but far more out of dread and fear. A spirit is not a thing to be trifled with. It must be fed and treated well, or else it will wreak vengeance upon the neglectful descendants who have dared to do so unaccountable a thing.

A strange phase of savage life is the relation of man to animals. The line between them is not very distinct. Among many people there exists the fear that men might be turned into animals with little difficulty. Tales are told of how it has happened, and these tales have come down into our folk lore, where we have gruesome stories of were-wolves and other unnatural combinations. The form in which this belief is found today among primitive peoples is Totemism. Now a totem is an animal (or in some places a plant) to which the people of a tribe who belong to that totem clan are supposed to be related. All the people belong to one or another of these clans, the supposition being that the animal was the ancestor of the clan. This makes the animal sacred or *tabu,* which means that it must not be killed by members of that totem clan. The only exception is when the animal is eaten religiously, as a symbol of the closeness of relationship between the clan and its totem. An Alaskan totem pole is nothing else than a representation of certain animals which are the totems of tribal clans.

IV

We are not yet at the end of the list. In various parts of the earth men are found acting in very queer ways with what we might call deities or gods only with apologies. They are fetiches. The name comes from the term *feitico,* which the Portuguese sailors gave to the strange objects which were a part of the religious paraphernalia of the West Africa negroes. The word as these sailors used it

means "something made" or "concocted." A man who wanted a fetich would go to the medicine man or witch doctor and have him make one for him. It was usually a diabolical mixture of all sorts of horrible and repulsive things put into the hollow of a gazelle horn, which was then sealed and hung around the neck of the possessor. In other places no such elaborate preparation was needed. Anything that struck the eye of the savage as queer or grotesque he might take as his fetich. The important thing is that a fetich is any object which is supposed to be the abode of a spirit, which will be of service to the user. The object then is worshiped only because of the spirit living in it. But this so-called worship is a peculiar thing. The spirit is told to do what the owner desires; it is often cajoled into doing it. In reality it is more of a slave in the possession of its owner, than a spirit to whom he comes with a request. It has been called "a god at man's disposal." If it does not do what is expected, the fetich is scolded and even beaten. Then if it continues to be obstinate in its disobedience, it is thrown away as being of no use—the spirit has departed; it is only a stick or stone or horn like any other.

Fetichism is the negation of all true religion and worship, where prayer and supplication and humility are the fitting attitudes. Whatever may be its origin, there it is—a force in savage life, always hurtful and tending to drag what little helpfulness there is in savage religion down into the mire. For the most part it is anti-social, a man securing a fetich to get even with an enemy or to secure luck at the expense of some one else. It is one of the darkest sides of a heathenism already clouded over by superstition and dark deeds.

Looking at fetichism broadly, we can see that it is one of the manifestations of the all-prevalent magic which is to be found in every part of the world among these animistic peoples. What is magic? It is hard to define. A savage is frequently in difficulty and confusion; he has wants of all kinds and he is at his wit's end to supply them. He is willing to do anything to get relief and secure what he desires.

Whatever he does must be with the help of the spirits about him. He will try to placate them by offerings and make request of them for what he desires, and we call this religion.

But this is not all he can do. In various ways he has picked up some bits of useful information—for example, that by striking two stones together a spark may be produced. This is the beginning of science, man's start in progress, but to the savage himself, controlled by his belief in spirits, there is no real difference between this and the other (the religious) method. In each case he believes that what is accomplished is the work of spirits or the result of spiritual influence. He does not see what we see, that in one case he is appealing to spiritual powers and in the other he has discovered one of the applications of the law of cause and effect, that he has started on his long course of scientific discovery and invention. He does not think about it at all; he finds that it works, he feels sure some spiritual influence is present. When any distinction is made by the savage himself, it is between that use of magic which is directed toward the public good, called white magic, and that which is private and selfish and directed toward hurting somebody, called black magic. Whenever a man secures what he desires from spiritual beings, not by prayer and dependence, but by compulsion and by a sense of superiority, of "knowing the trick," he debases religion and himself and thwarts any possibility of advance.

V

Almost nothing has been said about the character of these deities or spirits. They are just like the universe from which they are taken. They can be as kind as a summer afternoon; they can also be as cruel as a volcano. We have heard tales of the idyllic life of the simple uncontaminated savage. The dreadful fact is that for the savage the kind deities seem to have withdrawn for the most part, and he must have nearly all his dealings with cruel, malevolent gods, always seeking to do him harm. He has no one among the

spirits whom he can trust. Faith and confidence have no opportunity to develop and so lie dormant. "Animism seems devised for the purpose of tormenting men, and hindering them from enjoying life. . . . Gigantic spirits stride through the villages scattering epidemics around them. . . . They are not laughing fauns or mocking satyrs, but merciless messengers of death, enemies swollen with envy, who would fain hurl the living into the kingdom of the dead."

Having no faith in his gods, the savage can develop little faith in his neighbor. Distrust is everywhere present in his personal life, as tribal wars are the rule in his larger world. With little or nothing to restrain his impulses a man is controlled by his natural instincts. Being the stronger the man lords it over the woman, who is little better than a chattel. She is the drudge and the despised bearer of children and doer of chores. No advance in civilization can be made on this basis. Something must come in from the outside and turn the life into new channels before any change can take place. He gives to the gods what he thinks they need and want, and he determines this by his own needs and desires. But he offers these sacrifices to placate angry deities, to buy them off, so that they will not carry out their malignant designs. His life is on the low level of material wants and desires, and never gets above them. It is sickness and loss and death he wishes to avoid, and good crops, increase in his herd, and many children that he desires. His idea of salvation is merely to be saved from want and illness and bad luck. There is nothing morally elevating or spiritually progressive about it in any way.

VI

What is to become of these forms of religious life? Whenever they come into contact with higher forms of religion, they go to the wall. With no literature, no firmly intrenched priestly class with a well established tradition, with no founder and splendid history to look back upon, there is little to hold them when the elaborate worships and the uplifting

teachings of the higher faiths are presented to them. As a matter of present-day history, it must be regarded as significant that the aboriginal tribes of India are being absorbed into the great body of Hinduism. Buddhism has won the allegiance of many animists in her long history. Islam is making phenomenal progress in the Dutch East Indies, and in Central Africa and the Sudan. And in many places Christianity has won thousands of the primitive people and completely transformed their life. There seems to be no resisting power when once the battle is joined. Man naturally craves a God he can trust, who is interested in him and cares about his welfare. When such a God is presented, the sway of the old malignant spirits and demons ceases.

But this is not the whole story. It is not so difficult to bow animism out of the front door, but before long, dressed in a slightly different garb, it comes around to the back door, always finds its way into the house, and usually remains. It seems perfectly willing to travel *incognito*. It enjoys just about as much power, even though the house where it lives is in the possession of another owner. The Burmans have been Buddhists for hundreds of years, and all Burma is studded with the pagodas of an orthodox faith, but whenever a Burmese gets into trouble, he has recourse to the *nats*, the old spirits of Burma in pre-Buddhist days. The Christian Church overcame the paganism of the Roman Empire, but the old spirits and gods who had been dispossessed came back in the form of saint worship; they had new names, but to the people who had been pagan it was the same thing in another garb. It gave them the same old satisfaction in the same old way.

Have we entirely escaped in our Protestantism? What does it mean that there are many who are afraid to sit down thirteen at a table, who still "knock wood," who do not want to begin anything on Friday, who are afraid of Room 13, so that our hotels cannot have the number, who carry luck pennies and like to have a horseshoe over the door? These are but remnants of an animism long left behind, but

still active as an influence and at times as a real power. We are not so far away from the savage after all. We have many beliefs and practices which are not worthy of our civilization and our religious profession. A little housecleaning might not be amiss before we point the finger of scorn at the "poor benighted" animist in far-away New Guinea and Borneo.

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *The Place of Fear in Religion*

Distinguish between the kinds of fear men have. What is the difference in the effect on life between these different kinds of fear? What is it that can turn one kind of fear into another? What is meant when a man is spoken of as God-fearing?

II. *Animism—What Is It?*

What is the difference in intellectual outlook between an American college student and an animist? What would stand in the way of the college student becoming an animist?

III. *The Religion of Animists*

What leads an animist to worship his gods? Why would a spring be worshiped, or a dark cave, or an oak tree, or a mountain? What would lead to the worship of the smallpox demon? What effect on life would such worship be likely to have?

IV. *Magic and Religion*

What is the difference between the two? What difference can we see which an animist cannot? What magical practices are to be found in our own home communities? Why do people practice them, or believe in them? What influence do they have?

(For a view of animistic religion in its actual working, an excellent volume is "The Living Christ and Dying Heathenism," by Johann Warneck.)

CHAPTER II

WHO IS MY BROTHER?

The question, Who is my brother? stares every Hindu in the face. For more than two millenniums Hindus have tried to imagine that the question was settled, and settled forever. The attempts on the part of reformers to make it an issue have done little more than irritate them. The caste system through all the centuries has remained intact. To the Hindus their brothers are only those who are fortunate enough to be born into their own limited circle, and that is all there is to be said. Yet it is the burning question in India today. On its solution depends the future of the teeming millions who now call themselves Hindus. The readings which follow are passages chosen to throw light on the problem of brotherhood from the standpoint of the Bible.

Daily Readings

First Day: The Jews have always been an exclusive race. They have held themselves aloof from others, and despite persecutions and humiliations almost without parallel have considered themselves superior to their compatriots in every land. They consider themselves a select people, in God's special favor. Hosea expresses it most tenderly: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (11:1).

What impression would probably be created among a people by the habitual reading of such passages as this?

> Praise Jehovah, O Jerusalem;
> Praise thy God, O Zion. . . .
> He showeth his word unto Jacob,
> His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel.
> He hath not dealt so with any nation.
>
> Psalm 147:12, 19, 20.

SECOND DAY: This unwarranted exclusiveness was their undoing so far as God's purpose was concerned. They wrapped themselves about with their mantle of smug satisfaction and became more and more bigoted and narrow. We have in the story of Jonah a sermon in parable directed against this narrowness. Jonah typifies Israel in not desiring to go to a despised city like Nineveh with a message from God. When, however, he did go and preach, we are told "the people of Nineveh believed God" and repented. Now read the sequel:

> But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed unto Jehovah, and said, I pray thee, O Jehovah, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I hasted to flee unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Jehovah, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. And Jehovah said, Doest thou well to be angry? . . . Should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?—Jonah 4: 1-4, 11.

What definition of brotherhood do you think Jonah must have had? What can you gather as to the definition of the writer of the sermon story?

THIRD DAY: Paul was a member of this same race. Few in his day had carried their devotion further. Yet what is his attitude?

> If any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching

> the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless. Howbeit what things are gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ.—Phil. 3:4-7.

What is it that had made the change? This new loyalty to Jesus Christ had made a profound difference in all his relationships. He had put his pride of race behind his devotion to Christ, and lo, it ceased to be pride at all. How would our attitude toward despised people be affected if we should become deeply interested in them?

FOURTH DAY: This new attitude on Paul's part influenced his theory as well as his practice. Not only was he a brother in fact, but it became impossible for him to look on his own people in the same selfish way as before.

> And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.—Acts 17:26.

With all this he did not cease to feel that his own race was in a unique position with a unique mission to fulfil.

> I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.—Rom. 9:3-5.

Is patriotism then unjustifiable? Must patriotism mean exclusiveness and a sense of haughty superiority? What attitude should a patriot have toward alien peoples?

FIFTH DAY: Peter had a much harder time than Paul to be true to the spirit of his Master.

> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before

that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision.—Gal. 2:11, 12.

Yet this same Peter wins his victory over Jewish narrowness and is able to write to a Christian church, whose membership was Gentile as well as Jewish, such words as these:

But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God.—I Peter 2:9-10.

Try to put yourself in Peter's place and realize what it meant for this Jew to call Gentiles "the people of God." What are your prejudices? Is Peter's new experience to be yours?

Sixth Day: Jesus' life is full of illustrations of liberality and broadmindedness. He sat down and talked with a despised Samaritan woman. More than that, he made to her one of the most significant revelations of the wideness and universality of His kingdom to be found anywhere in the gospels!

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.—John 4:21, 23.

There are no bounds to such a Kingdom. All are brethren who come to their common Father in spirit and in truth.

Seventh Day:

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great command-

> ment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.—Matt. 22:35-40.

What then does it mean to be a brother? What is the measure of our obligation? What relation does brotherhood have to our relation with God?

There is a picture in the Revelation of the consummation of all things. It is really a rapture, in praise of Jesus Christ, our Lord. But notice the inclusiveness of the list of those who have been redeemed. Where do they come from? Who are to be our brothers in the great Kingdom of Jesus Christ?

> And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth. —Rev. 5:9, 10.

Study for the Week

I

Of all lands India is the land of religion. Many things can be said of this strange land, but the first and the last thing is that India is religious. In what other country have priests always been placed ahead of soldiers and statesmen? In what other country have famous kings been remembered because of their connection with religion? Her literature from top to bottom has been the literature of religion. More than in any other country in the world the people are compelled to be religious from the cradle to the grave, which, by the way, is a most happy use of language since they have neither cradles nor graves! To change their religion means

in a real sense to change their whole life. Let us go then to this God-intoxicated people and seek to discover what religion means to them.

II

Our first impression will surely be one of confusion. Indian religious life is a labyrinth, a tropical jungle of tangled beliefs and forms. There is a perfect babel of sounds. There are Buddhists in Burma and Bengal, Animists in the hills and jungles, Parsees in the west, Jains scattered here and there, Jews, Christians, the largest group of Mohammedans in the world, and finally Hindus, the most important and by far the most numerous body of religionists in the country.

We are now to study Hinduism, whose numbers were given as 214,570,000 by the last census (1911). But when we open the door and step in we do not know which way to go—there are so many paths. Hinduism is a maze whose intricacy no one has been able to reduce to any kind of order. Various statements may be made about Hinduism, all of which are true and which at the same time are in glaring contradiction with each other. Then how can there be anything called Hinduism, representing a real unity, when nothing can be asserted of belief, conduct, or worship on which there can be any agreement?

The question which arises is serious. What is Hinduism then, if a man can do as he pleases and believe what he likes and still be considered orthodox? We must be prepared for a strange revelation. Hindu orthodoxy is not one of belief or conduct or religious ceremonial; it is an orthodoxy of conformity, conformity to custom. Hinduism is primarily a form of social organization, known as caste. This is the great fact confronting one in India. Caste determines everything in the life of the individual and of society. It is the one bond which binds all these people together into what may be called a unity, for they all believe in it and cling to it with a death-like grip. At the same time caste is the most divisive

element in their life, for each caste is a kind of water-tight compartment exclusive to the last degree.

III

Caste means that a man must conform to a rigid code in respect of marriage, food, occupation, and residence. Of these regulations those governing marriage are the most important. One must not marry outside his own caste, or, as in many cases, his sub-caste. When it is remembered that everyone in India marries, that to be an old bachelor or an old maid is a disgrace, it is quite evident that there must be some difficulty in making matches in strict conformity to these rules. Particularly would this be true if match-making were unduly delayed. This led many centuries ago to the marriage of mere children, and all attempts to modify the system have been fought with great bitterness by the people, almost without exception. The law of child marriage is thus stated in the earliest Hindu law book, the Code of Manu, "A girl should be given in marriage before puberty."

With high child mortality as it exists in India, this system involves the constant presence in the country of an enormous number of widows, 26,000,000 and more, according to the last census. A large number of these are mere children, little girls in many cases not yet in their teens. These girls and women are not allowed to remarry. By a strange and terrible perversion woman is looked down upon in India; she is a kind of inevitable evil which must be borne. Compelled to live in the home of her deceased husband, the widow has been a slave and a drudge. Of all women her lot is most miserable. The theory is that, being married, she is bound to her husband forever. If he sickens or dies she is held responsible, so that it is not unjust to treat her as one guilty of crime. It has been considered meritorious for her to ascend her husband's funeral pyre and be burned to death with his body. An old text puts it thus, "If a woman's husband dies, let her lead a life of chastity, or else mount his

pyre." The British government has happily put a stop to this inhuman practice, but even yet a case of *suttee,* as it is called, comes to light occasionally, showing how deeply ingrained the old custom is. This is what caste has meant for woman. It is needless to say that man labors under no such restrictions. He may marry other women, even during the lifetime of his first wife.

No matter how loosely the other caste regulations may rest on an intelligent Hindu, he is like adamant regarding marriage. But caste does mean more to him than this. He is not to eat with men of other castes. He carries this out to the letter in many cases and insists, according to the old formulas, that his food be prepared by one of his own caste. He cannot always be sure of this, but the more scrupulous he is the farther he goes into all the details of the regulations. Certain castes have been given over so long to certain occupations that to be a member of that caste means following that occupation. It is against caste regulations for a Hindu to leave the sacred soil of India, the land of the gods. So technically every Hindu who travels abroad or goes to Europe or America for his education breaks caste, but this has become so common that it is winked at calmly.

IV

Caste cannot be accounted for completely, even by those who have studied it most deeply. Even so simple a fact as the exact number of castes is not known. There are so many subdivisions, conditions differ so greatly in different parts of the country, and caste lines are being so altered that much uncertainty exists.

The Hindus were early roughly divided into four classes. First came the priests, called Brahmins, then the warriors, called Kshatriyas, then the farmers, the Vaisyas. Underneath and not considered worthy to associate with the others, were the Sudras, the menial laborers, who were probably Aryans with aboriginal blood, or even pure Dravidians, as

the old inhabitants are called. The system of caste started then with these four classes. The key to the whole system has always been the Brahmin. He early made himself indispensable to the life of the people, and then made his position all the more secure by the imposition of the caste system. So long as this condition exists, he is in the place of supreme influence and honor.

When the Aryan ancestors of the Hindus first came into India, the father was the priest of the family. Each head of a family was considered competent to conduct the whole ritual of sacrifice without help from any outsider. But great changes gradually crept in. Worship consisted largely of sacrifice and its attendant ritual. More and more the conviction grew that the efficacy of a sacrifice consisted in the correctness of the ritual. The sincerity of a man's intentions and the quality of his life had nothing to do with the acceptability of his worship to the gods.

As the importance of sacrifice and ritual grew in the minds of the people, the burden of mastering the details of a growingly elaborate worship naturally increased greatly. A man busy with the cares of life, with a family to support, simply could not take the time to become expert and exact in matters connected with sacrifice and ritual. He must turn them over to the priestly class, who undertook to conduct all the sacrifices in exact accordance with the regulations. The priestly class soon came to dominate the whole life of the people, who were helpless and in the hands of men who held the keys of life and death, and were determined to maintain their control.

The Brahmin came to be regarded as a god among men. "Verily, there are two kinds of gods, for indeed the gods are the gods; and the Brahmans who have studied and teach sacred lore are the human gods." Not all the Brahmins today devote themselves to the sacred calling, but by virtue of his caste every Brahmin is sacred and inviolable. Whether he be a rich merchant, a trusted civil servant of the government, or a poor beggar on the streets, he is holy and revered.

No bondage has ever been so complete or unquestioned as that of the Brahmin priesthood.

The leadership of the Brahmins was based on real ability. As a class they have always been superior to all others in intelligence and learning. They guarded the sacred books, which had come down out of the past, with jealous care, not allowing the profane lips of the lesser castes to utter the sacred texts. They protected the purity of their blood more successfully than did others, and preserved with religious care the old traditions of their people. They have been the priests, the writers, the poets, the philosophers of India from the beginning, with few to offer effective resistance. No wonder they moulded India according to their own will, and today stand as a bulwark against all attempts to change the current of Indian life. A Brahmin may be abreast of all the learning of the west, he may be a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge, but as a leader of his people he still stands for child marriage, the enforced celibacy of widows, and all the superstitions of the ages—a strange paradox, to be sure, and exceedingly difficult to be patient with, when millions of our fellow beings now in the clutches of a debasing superstition might be liberated by the magic influence of so powerful a priesthood.

V

Some good things may be said about caste. In many cases it acts like a trade guild or a labor union in our country. It looks after its own members and prevents suffering and want in times of scarcity or famine. A man feels he has friends who can be counted upon. A real solidarity is thus attained, which tends toward stability and its consequent well-being. But when all has been said in its favor, the count against caste is overwhelming. In our time it is the chief obstacle in the way of Indian nationalism. Not patriotism but loyalty to caste is the Hindus' supreme obligation. Many Hindus recognize it and bemoan the condition, but the fact is, believe in it or not, they all conform. All the reformers of the past

and present have in one way or another planted themselves against the stream, only to be swept aside by the irresistible current. With all that can be said against caste, nothing more unanswerable has ever been charged than this, that it makes impossible unity and brotherhood among the Indian peoples. "Who is my brother?" asks a Hindu. "Only those in my own caste," comes the inevitable answer. He is despised by those of higher caste, while he in turn holds all those below him in like contempt. And when it comes to the 50,000,000 outcastes in India, the poor miserable dregs of the population, even their touch is polluting. Yes, more than this, even their shadow falling on the food which has been prepared for a high caste man contaminates it so that it must be thrown out.

The splendid opportunity which the priestly class possessed was used, it would seem, primarily to increase their own power and render the people more hopelessly dependent upon them. The pitiable condition of India today must be laid in large measure at the door of these misguided leaders. Secure in their own power, they have allowed the people to remain in abject ignorance. Claiming to be inherently better than any other class, they have bound even more firmly the bonds of caste upon the whole land. The rest of the people have taken their cue from them and are consequently split and divided up into innumerable exclusive communities, incapable of united action. The India of today, with its desire after new life and independence, finds the way blocked by caste. With no true unity, no real sense of brotherhood, no mutual sympathy, India is paying the price of her age-long subservience to a proud, priestly class, whose ideal was not service but self-aggrandizement. The old question, who is my brother? is clamorously asking to be answered anew, and not until the answer given is based on the rights of man as man and on the equality which comes through Jesus Christ, the Son of man, can India hope to take her place among the nations which are warring and struggling to make sure the day of true democracy.

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *What Brotherhood Is*

Give the best definition you can of brotherhood. What is the most convincing test of brotherhood? How could a man who understands only a strange language find out what you meant by brotherhood?

II. *Caste and Brotherhood*

What led the Indian people in the beginning to form castes? Were they justified? Do we have castes or a caste system in this country? Are we justified?

III. *The Brahmins and the Community*

What do the Hindus owe to the Brahmins? What is the net result in the whole community of their dominance? What responsibilities accompany intellectual and moral power? Have we any Brahmins in our civilization? What are the distinguishing marks? What steps must we take to fulfil the American promise of complete intellectual democracy?

("A Primer of Hinduism," by J. N. Farquhar, is an excellent handbook to use in connection with this and the following chapters.)

CHAPTER III

LIKE GODS, LIKE PEOPLE

Every religion has its definitions of purity and cleanness. Physical, ceremonial, moral, and spiritual purity are but different sides of the question, What does it mean to be clean? India furnishes answers of all kinds. An outline study of the meaning of these terms in the Bible will serve not only as a basis of comparison between Hinduism and our own religion, but will clarify our minds as to what really is pure and impure in the life we live and in the people around us.

Daily Readings

First Day: The ideas entertained by the early Hebrews as to what was clean and unclean were rooted in traditions extending much farther back than their existence as a separate people. All peoples in the savage state have very distinct ideas on the subject. A most useful service was rendered by these strict prohibitions: they kept alive in men's minds the fact that there was a distinction between clean and unclean.

The book of Leviticus is the great repository of the ceremonial laws of the Hebrews. As an illustration of its rules and regulations read the following:

> And Jehovah spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the living things which ye may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat. . . . And the swine, because he parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, but cheweth not the cud, he is unclean unto you. Of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their

carcasses ye shall not touch; they are unclean unto you.—Lev. 11:1-3, 7, 8.

We eat pork today—why do you think it was excluded from the diet of the Jew? If you cannot answer the question, remember at least one thing, that the Jew felt very deeply that he would be morally contaminated by eating it.

Second Day: These strict laws resulted in separating the Hebrew people from their neighbors. They were not allowed to do what they saw others do.

> Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all mine ordinances, and do them; that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, vomit you not out. And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. . . . And ye shall be holy unto me: for I, Jehovah, am holy, and have set you apart from the peoples, that ye should be mine.—Lev. 20: 22, 23, 26.

Is there any wonder they felt themselves to be a chosen people, separate and distinct from the nations around them? "Gentile" and "unclean" became almost synonymous, and the fact is, they did have in their law and traditions what others lacked and sorely needed. If the attitude they took was right, on what basis could it be justified? What did the distinction between clean and unclean have to do with it?

Third Day: We must not think all the laws on which the distinction between pure and impure was made were ceremonial laws. This would be to discredit the legal sections of the Old Testament and hide their chief glory. A clean man was one who not only obeyed the restrictions as to food, touching carcasses, etc., but was morally uncontaminated.

> Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
> Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image. . . .
> Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain. . . .

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . .
Honor thy father and thy mother. . . .
Thou shalt not kill.
Thou shalt not commit adultery.
Thou shalt not steal.
Thou shalt not bear false witness. . . .
Thou shalt not covet.—Exodus 20: 3-17.

Yet the tendency to emphasize the ceremonial over the moral became a characteristic tendency among the leaders of the people. To be clean was very frequently to observe the ceremonial and to neglect the more important moral requirements.

> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel!—Matt. 23: 23-24.

Fourth Day: In two important respects Jesus introduced revolutionary ideas into the conception of clean and unclean. Keeping in mind the regulations from Leviticus in the reading for the First Day, read Jesus' word about the same thing:

> There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. . . . For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man.—Mark 7: 15, 21-23.

If you had been a strict follower of the Levitical code, what difference would it have made in actual conduct to become a follower of Jesus?

Jesus went further than this even. He revolutionized our whole idea of what morality itself is. A clean man is not only one whose outward acts are above reproach, but one whose thoughts and motives are pure.

> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteeous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.—Matt. 23:27, 28.
>
> Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. . . .
>
> Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. . . .
>
> Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.—Matt. 5:8, 21, 22, 27, 28.

Could anything be more scathing or searching? What now is your definition of purity?

Fifth Day: Jesus was altogether consistent in his attitude. No man was unclean in his estimation because of any outward circumstances whatsoever. The ceremonial was entirely subordinated to the moral. "Blessed are the pure in heart," are his words. The Pharisee in proud disdain marvelled at the company he kept.

> And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples,

> How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.—Mark 2: 15-17.

In everything formal and external these classes were far inferior to Jesus' critics. What indication does this give us of the standard of Jesus' estimate of men?

SIXTH DAY: Jesus' conception was so exalted that it was not easy to learn. Peter had an experience which opened his eyes to the wonder of the new teaching about cleanness and uncleanness. Recalling the story of Peter's vision, we can hear him saying,

> I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the heaven. And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common.—Acts 11: 5-9.

The account states that when Peter went to Cæsarea his first words were, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." (Acts 10: 34-35.)

SEVENTH DAY: Paul tells us he learned what sin was by that commandment which said, "Thou shalt not covet" (see Rom. 7: 7-11). It was the only commandment which was a prohibition of an inner desire; all the others had to do with

conduct, with outward acts. He found those not difficult to obey, but he went to pieces at this point—he could not control his desires. He never forgot the lesson that cleanness is first a matter of the inner life and that all else is secondary.

> But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better.—I Cor. 8:8.
>
> I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.—Rom. 14:14.
>
> To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.—Titus 1:15.

Remember in thinking about these verses that Paul was most scrupulous about his conduct; what he is emphasizing is that nothing which God has made is impure in itself. All uncleanness is man-made and comes from the abuse of what God made pure and good.

Study for the Week

I

The statement was made in the last study that orthodoxy in Hinduism is conformity to caste regulations, and that beyond this anything might go. This is very far, however, from saying that a Hindu is indifferent to questions of belief and worship. He takes these things very seriously and looks upon them as indispensable. The strange thing is, there is every kind of belief and every kind of worship. Nothing is too extravagant or outlandish to be included in the theology and ritual and even the ethical code of Hinduism. There is no limit to its powers of assimilation. The one reason why Jesus Christ is not enumerated among the gods of Hinduism is that there is something in Christ Himself which seems inevitably to defy such an appropriation. The attitude toward

Jesus Christ which the Hindu objects to most strenuously and cannot understand is that expressed by Peter to the rulers of the Jews, when he said, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Hinduism is so broad that almost any way of salvation will do. So long as the man is devoted to his gods, it makes little difference what kind of gods they are. And in Hinduism we have every kind, representing every degree of moral attainment and even moral failure. The individual Hindu may view all the gods and all the methods of worship in the land as legitimate, yet at the same time he has his own particular gods and ceremonies to which he devotes his attention. In general a man believes what has been handed down to him, and here the traditions of his family are most influential.

II

Looking over Hinduism broadly today the people are seen to be adherents of one or the other of two great sects, the worshipers of Siva and the worshipers of Vishnu.

The worship of Siva is found principally in the South of India. The Sivites, as they are called, worship not only the great and terrible Siva himself, but his wives, among whom the best known are probably Kali and Durga. Ganesa, the son of Siva, the elephant-headed god of wisdom, is very widely revered and worshiped. Where Siva himself is worshiped, no images or idols are to be found, the ever present phallus, the emblem of the sect, being the chief symbol and object of worship. Kali is represented in her temples as a devilish woman hungry for blood, with her tongue hanging over her breast and with her feet planted on the body of her husband, whom she has just killed. She holds the head of her dead spouse in one of her numerous hands, and is rendered the more repulsive by a necklace of skulls and a hideous face. Kali is the only prominent divinity of India who demands bloody sacrifices. At regular periods her

tongue is spattered with the blood of calves and goats to appease her thirst for blood.

Siva and his wives represent in part the stern, cruel, destructive forces in the world. Why anyone should be led to worship such deities is hard for us to understand. It cannot be doubted, however, that in each of us there are elements of the tragic, and that the dreadful has a strange fascination for us. Had we been brought up where the cruel forces of nature seemed to be able to vent themselves against us, then might we not hope to be better off if we offered them worship and devotion? It would not fill us with hope and joy, but it might seem the only thing we could do. At any rate, whatever may be the explanation, millions of our fellow beings are doing just this thing. What effect can worship of such gods have upon these whose horizon has no place for nobler, truer conceptions of divinity? To say the least, there can be little to lift life out of its dreary fears and set it on its way rejoicing in joy and peace.

III

The worshipers of Vishnu are to be found principally in the North. Vishnu is worshiped not so much in his own person as in that of his various incarnations. The most famous of these are Rama and Krishna, the latter being worshiped in all probability more than any other of the gods of India. The idea of incarnation has just been mentioned. Not found in the worship of Siva, it is one of the leading conceptions among the Vaishnavas, as the worshipers of Vishnu are called. Krishna is Vishnu in the flesh, to borrow a Christian term. He was a man and lived a human life like Jesus, yet how unlike Jesus! Whatever good might come from the clear revelation of a god in human form, it is vitiated by the career and character of Krishna himself. The story of the human-divine warrior in the great epic, the Mahabarata, and elsewhere pictures him as falling in love with an endless succession of shepherd maidens and begetting children by the thousands. No purity, no high ideals of home life,

no conception of an ennobling relation between men and women mark his earthly life. What must be the thoughts suggested to the minds of those who read the ancient poem and worship at his shrine?

A further factor must be taken into consideration. The new element in worship is called *Bhakti,* which means devotion to the god, a kind of faith or trust in Krishna. A worshiper is not compelled to consider himself as estranged from an angry, far-away deity. He may pour out his soul to his god in adoration and devotion, and feel sure there is a response. All this is a movement in the right direction, just as is true with the idea of incarnation. The trouble with the whole thing is that the god who is worshiped and to whom men are asked to devote themselves is unworthy of the best, even in man himself. And when it is realized that men tend to become like the objects of their worship, the seriousness of the situation in India is apparent.

Together with Siva and Vishnu, and forming a kind of trinity, is the figure of Brahmá. He is looked upon as an exalted, personal creator, a kind of necessary background to all things. He has one temple, and little worship is directed to him, but he is there as a conception, a necessity to the Hindu mind as it looks out into the great unknown. The significant question is, how do the Hindus really look on their gods? Here we get very far down into the depths of the Hindu soul. He has never been able to get away from the haunting suggestion that the gods are not the most important thing after all. This tendency has expressed itself in various ways. The people tend to neglect the gods even while they worship them. They have raised the priesthood and sacrifices and prayer, the various elements of worship, to a place of such importance that these have seemed in reality more necessary than the gods themselves. It does not make so much difference what god is worshiped, provided it is done correctly! Could anything be stranger? But India *is* strange, so we must not be surprised at anything.

IV

This same feeling that there is something back of the gods and more important than they has another and even more significant expression. Away back in the beginnings in the Rigveda many gods are mentioned and praised. To read any one of these hymns, to Agni say or Varuna, one might conclude that it was written by a monotheist, that this one god filled his horizon and was the sole object of his adoration. But to our amazement the same attitude is assumed toward another and still another of these mighty beings. This attitude, however, seems to have been only a stepping-stone. The Hindu could not remain long at this halfway house. Before long these various gods were looked upon as manifestations of some being or power back of them all. The Hindu was reaching out after a unity, and the wonderful thing is, he found it. Over and above and in all things, constituting and comprehending them all, was Brahma, or Brahman. You say this is pantheism, and so it is, the most extreme form of that doctrine ever held by any large group of men. Of course it was elaborated by the learned Brahmin at the top, but in no country has a philosophical theory penetrated so deeply the whole life of a people as in India. Whether they realize it or not, the people of India are bound by the fatalism and pessimism of the doctrine of their leaders. The sense of the unreality of what is seen by the eye and felt by the hand is abroad in the land—a kind of world-weariness; a far-away, wistful look is in the eye, as though men would escape from the bondage of the physical and material and fly away to their real home in the unseen beyond.

Brahma is all the reality there is. Nothing else exists at all, not one single thing. Then how does it come that we ourselves seem to be real beings, and that trees and houses exist? All this is *Maya,* illusion. We are completely mistaken, sadly misguided by our senses. It comes about then that the great object in life is to get rid of this illusion, to realize that nothing exists except Brahma. We are to carry this con-

ception to the extreme limit, until we can enter fully into the meaning of the thought that we are Brahma and that Brahma is ourselves, and that there is nothing else in the universe. This has led to the practice of meditation and all kinds of austerities to induce a kind of self-hypnosis, all with the aim of ending the illusion and losing ourselves in Brahma.

The outlook is hopeless. About all we can expect in this life or stage of existence is to make a little progress. What we have to look forward to is an almost endless series of transmigrations, during the weary course of which we shall be born into other forms, some higher, but alas! some perhaps far lower. All this is determined by the action of Karma, the law by which we inevitably reap the fruit of our present actions in the next life, and so on until—what? Until in the end our illusion is completely dissipated and we arrive at our goal—but such a goal! It is to drop back into the nothingness of Brahma out of which we came. As a matter of fact, all Hindus, whatever else they may hold, believe in transmigration and in the effects of the law of Karma. This theory hangs like a pall over the fair land of India. There is scarcely the slightest flicker of hope; activity and endeavor are frustrated by the fatal working of Karma, and there can be little or no development of personality. How could there be, when personality is denied in the Brahma into which we sink back, when our misspent existence finishes its miserable tale?

V

All the significant acts in the life of a Hindu are connected with religion. There are certain domestic ceremonies, the observance of which "is absolutely binding on every man who wishes to remain a Hindu." There is the ceremony of "name-giving" and that of "food-giving" in babyhood, which are usually observed together. The ceremony of initiation is highly important. It is a boy's introduction to his religious training. Sacred texts are muttered over him

by a Brahmin priest and he is invested with the sacred thread, which is placed over his shoulder. He is born into a new life, hence all those really belonging to the Hindu community are known as the "twice-born." The last essential ceremony for the young man is marriage, which becomes doubly significant in view of the stringency of caste rules. Even to the end of his life he feels bound by caste regulations.

Then there is ancestor worship. The bodies of the dead are burned in India, the ceremony being carried out by low caste men, because everything connected with death is inauspicious and even polluting. For ten days funeral ceremonies are conducted, the most characteristic feature of which being the offering of a ball of cooked rice to the spirit of the departed. On the eleventh day an elaborate ceremony is observed. For the first year this ceremony is repeated each month, and after that time the ceremonies become annual affairs.

The worship of the gods takes many forms. As Mr. Farquhar classifies them, we have "(1) Daily prayers, connected with bathing and teeth-cleaning, and daily sacrifices. . . . (2) The daily worship of the household gods. . . . (3) The recurrent festivals, fasts, and holydays. . . . (4) The worship of the temple. This takes a large place in the lives of all Hindus except modern educated men, who very seldom go near a temple at all, at least in the North."

The religious life is stimulated by the great festivals or *melas,* held periodically at well known centers, like Puri and Benares and Allahabad. Here the people gather in thousands, some traveling long distances in their religious devotion. They are frequently attended by devotees, who in fulfilment of a vow have measured the whole distance in the dust and dirt with their bodies. Here also are to be found the "holy men" of India, the *fakirs,* who by various forms of self-torture are seeking to please their divinities—that is, when they are sincere, for among them are many who are true *fákirs* in the American county-fair sense, seeking to win

shekels by a show of devotion and suffering. Great crowds gather at Benares and there in the holiest city of India bathe in the sacred waters of the Ganges. Cleansing is what they want, but how can cleansing be found in dirty offal-laden water?

All these popular manifestations of religion are looked at askance and even with scorn by the educated, cultured Hindu. He considers them childish and meaningless. He pities the poor, benighted crowd which gives itself to this form of religious expression. Yet with all this he is a Hindu. He observes caste rules and is enamored of the wonderful past of his country and its religious literature. He claims to be in the true line of succession with the sages of old, only he has risen to the place where gross manifestations, such as the crowd takes delight in, mean nothing to him. He pities them all and will have nothing to do with their worship. Yet he considers himself a member of the same community and is extremely sensitive to any movement away from the ancient landmarks.

VI

And is this all, even in outline? By no means. "With the exception of the cultured few, the whole people live in terror of evil spirits." They are hemmed in by superstitious fears on every side. How disconcerting it is to read, after our discussion of the beliefs and worships of India, that ninety-five per cent of the Hindus are demon worshipers! Of course this is alongside the worship of the other divinities, but what confusion! There is nothing these people, particularly the simpler people in the villages, do not worship, literally nothing. They are ignorant and full of fear, they turn to all the gods and spirits they hear about. The pathos of their condition stirs the heart. India is god-intoxicated or god-hungry, which? The masses of the Hindus are in deplorable ignorance, and subject to all kinds of superstitious fears. Does it not indicate a lack of fundamental strength in the Hindu system when after thousands of years such failures

mark its path? Something might be said if real improvement could be discovered. The contrary is the case—never was Hinduism less able than today to accomplish moral and spiritual regeneration among the people of India.

VII

One of the best evidences of the statement just made is the prevalent religious unrest in India today, and various attempts are being made to render Hinduism fit to meet the changing conditions of the new age. More than a score of recent attempts have been made to put life into the decrepit body of Hinduism. There are reactionary movements seeking by devotion and enthusiasm to make the old forms pulse with life again. One of the most significant of these is that led by Mrs. Besant, an Englishwoman who lives in Benares and has founded the Central Hindu College, where Hinduism is taught and extolled in its entirety. Mrs. Besant does not stop at anything. She accepts all there is in Hinduism, and seeks to show that every element, lofty and degrading, is a real element of an ideal religion. Discredited though she may be in the estimation of many, she has a great hold. Hindus are flattered by such praise as this brilliant woman pours on all things Indian, and look on her as a defender of their faith.

But the modern spirit and modern ideas cannot be kept out, and we find movements, like that of the Arya Samaj, which are passionately loyal to Hinduism but seek to introduce reforms. Child marriage is prohibited and under certain conditions widows are allowed to remarry. But with these good regulations are to be found others most repulsive to our moral sense. Thus to a bitter hatred of Christianity is added a smattering of reform, which does not go to the fundamental defects of the Hindu system at all. But the Samaj has grown and the latest figures give a membership of 243,000.

From one viewpoint then we see the ancient faiths making the strongest efforts to retain their old position of

dominance over the life of India. "But there is another aspect of the situation which requires to be clearly realized. The triumphant revival of the old religions, with their growing bodyguard of defence organizations, has been accompanied by *continuous and steadily increasing inner decay.*"

The Hindu mind has also tried to find some half-way stopping place between Hinduism and Christianity. The most notable attempt in this direction is the Brahmo Samaj. Founded nearly a century ago by a remarkable Hindu, named Ram Mohan Roy, it has attracted the allegiance of a small but influential group of cultured men, and is still a force in India. To this group belongs the well-known Bengali poet and lecturer, Rabindranath Tagore, whose recent visit to this country attracted so much attention. Influenced far more by the Christian spirit than in many cases they are aware, these men have discarded all the crude and idolatrous features of Hinduism and seek to exemplify the best ethical principles of Jesus and other great religious leaders. But halfway houses in religious history have always been built to accommodate too few people, and the Brahmo Samaj, with its little handful of members, is a striking illustration of the futility of attempting to mix Christianity with what is alien to its genius and in the end to make a convincing appeal to the human heart.

The air is full of expectancy. India has already been deeply moved by Christianity. With all the many movements and counter-movements, one thing we may be sure of—India will remain intensely religious. The old forms still have tremendous hold, but India is asking questions, and this shows she is not content. Have we anything which will help her to a solution more satisfying? What is it?

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *Ceremonial and Moral Cleanness*

Can a man be clean outwardly and not inwardly? Now turn it around, can a man be clean inwardly and not out-

wardly? But what about life in the trenches? State as nearly as possible. the ideal relation between outward and inward cleanness.

II. *Gods and Their Worship*

Distinguish between the worship of Siva and that of Vishnu. Which is the higher form of worship? Why? What would prevent either form from being compared favorably with Christianity?

III. *Philosophy and Life*

What is there about the prevailing philosophy in India which fosters a pessimistic outlook on life? How general is this pessimism? What kind of a philosophy or theory of life is needed to give moral energy and a joyful optimism to these people? Where can such an outlook on life be found?

IV. *The Changing Situation*

What has changed the situation in India so that men are no longer quite satisfied with the old theories? What is being done by the Hindus to meet the situation? Have these attempts the promise of success in them? Give reasons for your answer.

CHAPTER IV

VANITY OF VANITIES, ALL IS VANITY

Buddhism is the subject of study for this and the next week. For a Buddhist, "all the constituents of life are misery," to use a phrase taken from the sacred literature. Life, then, is not worth living. What is the Christian attitude toward life? What is its meaning? What makes it worth living? These and other questions are bound to arise in contrast to the negations of Buddhism. What backing have we in our Scriptures for a hopeful, optimistic view of life?

Daily Readings

First Day: The book of Ecclesiastes has, in a number of its features, the ring of Buddhism. A surfeit of pleasures has resulted in disgust. Life seems meaningless and full of vanity. This is so much like the attitude of the typical Buddhist *Sutta* (a collection of wise sayings) that it may be well for us to start just there.

> Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath man of all his labor wherein he laboreth under the sun? . . . All things are full of weariness; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.—Eccl. 1:2, 3, 8.

A "world weariness" had seized this man and nothing seemed bright or cheerful. Not even is there any hope in the future. Life is simply not worth living. But for us there is something else, and that is to ask how a man could manage to get into such a fix.

Second Day: We must try to find out the cause of such deep-dyed pessimism. We have not far to go. In the chapter

immediately following ample cause is given, enough to drive the stoutest heart into a cynical, blasé attitude toward everything.

> I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced because of all my labor; and this was my portion from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun.—Eccl. 2:9-11.

No wonder he was glutted with pleasure. "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy" (v. 10). We need go no further; here is all the explanation we need. Run over in your mind the names of any who are more or less like this man. How can you account for it? With what kind of a life do cynicism and pessimism go? Has selfishness any connection with it?

THIRD DAY: But what shall we say of life? How can we be true to all the facts? What must our attitude be in view of all the ugly and evil things, as well as of the fine, encouraging things around us everywhere? The first chapter of Genesis may give us a lift. Seven times it is said that what God created was good. It is a universe with goodness at the heart of it.

> And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.—Gen. 1:31.

When all was complete and God had looked at it, "behold, it was very good." In this word-picture of a great poet, life and all the activities involved in living are altogether worth while. Is there any reason today to change that verdict?

FOURTH DAY: How are we to preserve an attitude of hopefulness and good cheer? Following the path of natural in-

clination without restraint will bring anyone out just where the "Preacher" in Ecclesiastes found himself. Paul knew that and paints a picture of the contest of the two natures within man most vividly.

> I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?—Rom. 7:21-24.

There is no other way out of it, we must take sides in this conflict. If there were no hope of victory, there would be good grounds for discouragement.

Paul found, however, that he was not to remain a slave. He knew what victory meant and lived with the assurance that all things work together for good to them that love God. (Rom. 8:28). Recall his classic statement of this great optimistic truth.

> For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. . . . But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.—Rom. 8:5, 6, 11.

FIFTH DAY: The human body, which is to the Buddhist an object of loathing, is honored greatly in Christianity. A sane view is taken of all bodily functions. In one discussion of the diversity of spiritual gifts, Paul uses the human body as an illustration of his meaning. He thus indirectly testifies to the honor to be given the body by followers of Jesus Christ.

> But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . . And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.—I Cor. 12: 18-21, 26.

The highest honor of all is that our bodies are looked upon as temples, that is, sacred and inviolable. After speaking of the base uses of the body which are to be shunned, Paul makes this statement:

> Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.—I Cor. 6: 19, 20.

> Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.—I Cor. 3: 16, 17.

Sixth Day: Family life, the relationship between husband and wife, which a Buddhist must repudiate to make any perceptible progress in religion, is most sacred and holy in Christianity. In the epistle to the Ephesians Paul uses this relation as analogous to that existing between Christ and his Church. Could any higher honor be imagined?

> Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.—Eph. 5: 25-27.

Christianity has emancipated woman by placing her on an equality with her husband in the life of the family. This one result, produced wherever Jesus Christ is honored, has been the most wholesome single social product of Christianity. It has made possible the building up of a unique institution, the home, which is known only where the influence of our religion has reached.

SEVENTH DAY: Life is very different because Jesus Christ lived. He became one like us. His daily life was in no sense ascetic. He lived a normal life among men, and sympathized with them in all their joys and sorrows. He worked hard in the carpenter shop as a young man. His life of public service was most strenuous, but in it all He shows a zest for living. He loved childhood and its innocence. He was never too busy to give some attention to children.

> And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. . . . And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.—Mark 10: 13, 14, 16.

His whole healing ministry and His feeding of hungry people are windows into Jesus' soul, showing the sympathy He had with men and women and their joys and sorrows. The picture we get of His attendance at the marriage at Cana puts the seal of His approval upon the merrymaking of a wedding feast.

We sum up Jesus' whole attitude by those words of His recorded by John, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10: 10).

STUDY FOR THE WEEK

I

It is a far cry from Japan to India, but the entire distance

between these lands is covered by the religion known as Buddhism. Korea, China, Tibet, Manchuria, and Mongolia hear the sound of the yellow-robed monks as they beg their bread and drone out their prayers at the stated periods each day. To the south of the great barrier of mountain and jungle which separates these northern peoples from those of Southern Asia, Buddhism is also to be found. The form is somewhat different, but the faith of the great Buddha is the established religion. Beginning with French Indo-China, Siam and Burma reach entirely across the most eastern of the three peninsulas which Asia sends out into the southern ocean, and here the tinkling of the temple bells is always heard and the graceful pagodas greet the eye at every turn. One other land must be mentioned to complete the circuit and that is the entrancing island of Ceylon, far to the south, where the whole history of the people is little more than the history of Buddhism on the island, and where today the religion is to be found in as pure a form as in any Buddhist land.

But what about India? That is the great surprise. The land of the Buddha himself, where he lived and taught and died, the sacred land to which pilgrimages are still devoutly made, has no followers of the Buddha! All these statements are true; yet Buddhism as a religion in India is dead. It is gone, gone we may believe never to return, swallowed by the Hinduism which once it seemed almost on the point of driving out of the country.

II

With all the differences and contradictions between Buddhist sects and Buddhism in different countries, the beginning of the whole movement is in the life and character of a man who lived in North India in the latter part of the sixth and the earlier years of the fifth century B. C. Gautama Buddha was the son of a petty prince of an Aryan tribe, dwelling under the shadows of the great Himalaya range. Very little is known of his life until he was about twenty-nine years old.

There is much legendary material, but few facts to mark the years of early manhood. He grew up like most young men similarly situated, is reputed to have been brave and strong and to have excelled in manly sports. He was married and became the proud father of a son.

One tradition, if any truth can be placed in it at all, shows him to have been of a thoughtful, meditative cast of mind, but this was nothing uncommon in the India of that day. He is said to have seen in turn an old decrepit man, a man lying by the roadside ill and covered with loathsome sores, a corpse already some time dead and decayed, and last of all a mendicant monk. All these intensified his growing conviction that human life was full of woe, that no good thing could be counted on to last, and that the best thing to do was to desert the world and become a religious wanderer. At any rate, when he was about twenty-nine years of age, he tore himself loose from his home and became a mendicant, exchanging his princely robes for the rags of a penniless wayfarer. The birth of his son seemed to have been a last straw for young Gautama, his heart being so strongly drawn out to the little fellow that he felt he must make the "great renunciation" now or never be able to make it at all.

In all this Gautama was a typical Hindu. There would have been no Buddhism had this step been all. Whenever a man in India felt the tug of the unseen in his soul, the only thing he thought of doing was just what this young man did—leave his home, renounce all relationships, and become a wanderer or a solitary hermit. For five or six years he lived this life, at first going from teacher to teacher, recluses like himself, to find peace and satisfaction for his soul. None was able to lead him out into freedom and enlightenment. He then gave himself to a most extravagant asceticism. So far did he carry his penances that he became the center of a little group which naturally offered him the palm of excellence. He became so emaciated that nothing seemed left but skin and bones. He all but robbed himself of life itself. When he fell over in a swoon, his band of faithful followers thought

him dead and wondered at the fortitude which they could not attain.

When finally he recovered consciousness, a great conviction was born in his mind, that no satisfaction could be had by any amount of self-mortification. Had he not tried it, and gone to the farthest bound in his experiment? And was he not quite as far from the goal of his desires as he was when he began? He had left his home because his heart craved what could not be secured there; he now renounced asceticism as being quite as futile. His decision so disgusted his erstwhile admirers that they turned their back on him with scorn. He had surrendered to a lower ideal, they thought. They little knew then what was surging through the mind of their hero of a few days before.

In turning away from asceticism, Gautama declared that he would travel the "middle path" between luxury on one side and asceticism on the other. Neither of these had given him satisfaction, so he would eschew both. This was surely wholesome. He believed that a man ought to live a normal life, keeping his body in good trim, and living as long as possible a healthy, robust life. Had he only carried this theory into all the relationships of life, incalculable good would have come to the millions of Asia. But he stopped short, and by the institution of an order of monks condemned multitudes of eager religious souls to a life of mendicancy and unproductivity, and by insisting on celibacy for all earnest minded seekers after religion struck a severe blow at the home and the position of woman in it.

Gautama had settled conclusively several very important things, but they were purely negative. His empty soul was still craving an answer to its questioning, and he must persist until he find it. He was plunged into a dreadful mental and moral conflict, which is described most vividly and realistically in Buddhist literature. He was torn by the suggestion to give it all up and go back to his home and its joys and responsibilities. Troops of demons sought to seduce him, but he remained steadfast. He had started out to find his

heart's desire and he would allow nothing to stand in his way.

One morning he sat down under the now famous and sacred Bo tree, or tree of wisdom, to eat the meal which had been given him by a villager's daughter. Here he remained all day; here he had the last battle with his lower nature; and as the day sank to rest his victory was won. Doubts which had assailed him so long now departed, and their place was taken by the peace for which he had thirsted these many years. He had now become the Buddha, which means the "Enlightened." He had grasped the meaning of life and its sorrow, and could cure it!

Any one who could do that would surely have a gospel to which men and women would respond. What was his secret; what his cure? On what did his peace rest? The Buddha's discovery was that rest and peace could be had by self-mastery, by the suppression of our desires. This is to be brought about by self-discipline and self-control. He had already proved that no benefit was to be derived from penances and vigils, and he had turned away from the teachers of his time with a feeling of their utter inadequacy. And now, with sublime self-confidence and assurance, he propounds a new means of salvation. It is to be attained solely by one's own efforts; it is literally *self*-conquest. We shall see a little later the completeness of his sweep, how thoroughgoing his assertion that with not a particle of help from the outside each man for himself was to work out his "own salvation with fear and trembling." Would that he might have added with Paul, "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12, 13); but of course that would not be Buddhism. The Buddha's word was "Each man is his own helper; there is none other to help him."

There was another side to his victory under the Bo tree. When the new truth had dawned upon him the temptation came to go off alone, and in solitude bask in the sunlight of his new attainment. This temptation he repudiated and went

at once to Benares and was able to win back the five disciples who had abandoned him a short time before. He declared his purpose to "turn the wheel of the excellent law," that is, "to set rolling the royal chariot-wheel of a universal empire of truth and righteousness."

Gautama the Buddha was now about thirty-five years old. Beginning at once his travels, he spent the next forty-five years journeying back and forth in Northern India proclaiming his message and winning converts on every side. During the wet season he and his disciples would remain in one place, he giving instruction, answering questions, and expounding more fully his theory of life. As soon as the dry season came he was afoot again in his work of love and sympathy, ceaselessly carrying his message to great and small, and exemplifying his teaching in his own life and practice. He continued his instruction until the very end, reiterating the essential points of his system with great care and elaborateness. Then passed out of the world one of the purest and noblest of the sons of men. Few can compare with him, only one or two can surpass him. All honor to one who lived so purely and bravely and left so fragrant a memory for all future generations!

III

The life of Gautama Buddha was singularly simple and his character without dissimulation and guile. His teaching, however, was subtle and intricate. Not that there were not simple aphorisms and moral rules which the humblest layman could understand, but that the slightest movement toward an understanding of his doctrine involves one in the closest philosophical and psychological thinking. We must try to understand what are called the "Three Fundamental Signs." The first one of these truths or "Signs" may be stated in the language of the sacred literature, "All the constituents of life are impermanent," which means that everything in the universe is changing. There is nothing stable; all is in flux. This sounds very much like our theory of evolution or "the

philosophy of change" of the French philosopher, Henri Bergson, and it *is* like it. This is one of the remarkable things about early Buddhism, that it seems in many features so closely in accord with modern thought.

Now, the Buddha carried this theory of change to the farthest bounds. Nothing was to be excluded, absolutely nothing. He did not go to the length of saying there were no gods, but what if there were? The gods are bound fast to the wheel of change as much as any other beings. They are gods now, but they might become less than a human being—a crawling snake or a maggot—in their transmigrations. So man was left entirely to his own resources. With no god above there could be no prayer and worship, and this is the fact in this strange religion. The best that man can do is to study himself and, learning from the examples of others, start out on the path of attainment as best he may. It is a cheerless, hopeless path, we say, and Buddhists have said so too. The theories of the Buddha are too high for men and women out in the world amid the trials and difficulties of life.

There are few Buddhists today who hold to what the Buddha taught. The reason is easy to find. He was attempting to do the impossible. That fundamental craving of all men for a god to love and worship, for one whom they can trust, to whom they can pray, and who loves them, cannot be eradicated. Even in Burma and Ceylon, where the doctrine has remained purer than in the north, the cult of the Buddha and his relics is to be found in full bloom everywhere. The Buddha who repudiated all gods and any sense of dependence on them is worshiped and addressed in prayer himself! Could there be any stronger testimony to the impossibility of imposing a system which runs counter to this craving of the human heart after God?

IV

The second of the "Signs" is stated thus, "All the constituents of life are full of misery." This sounds like pes-

simism run mad. To live is to be unhappy. This is literally what the Buddha meant. His study of human nature led the Buddha to see that life is dominated by desire. Men want things; it is this that makes life go. But this same desire or thirst is the very thing which makes men miserable. Eaten up by this craving for more, whatever it may be—pleasure, gain, honor, length of days—man is made the more discontented by the very desire he feeds upon. Is not this just as true today and among ourselves as in India so long ago? No wonder the Buddha is looked upon as one of the greatest psychologists the world has ever known.

So far was this attitude carried that nothing in life seemed worth while; it was all a vain show. The monks were taught to look with loathing on the human body, to consider one after another all the nauseating things which could be enumerated about it, the idea being to inculcate disgust and a real desire to get away from it and what it stood for. Here is a quotation taken from one of the sacred books—there are many others.

"This body is a nest of loathly sores;
A dank and slippery skin doth wrap it round;
And from a thousand thousand oozing pores
It sendeth out its stenches, like an open wound."

Buddhism has always had a low idea of woman. She is a kind of stumbling block to man. He can never proceed far in the way of attainment in her company. In his depreciation of life Buddha put a ban on marriage and held that it was entirely foreign to spiritual attainment. One of the old writings contains this stanza:

"With handmaidens and jewels rare,
Of womankind surpassing fair,
Our little boy upon her arm,
My wife came, seeking me.

But I, of evil lures aware,
Beheld in her a subtle snare,
  Designed to do me deadly harm,
  Disguised by Mara's treachery!
Such bonds have lost their hold on me,
They chain him not whose mind is free."

Clinging to life is what brings misery. Then let go, cease desiring, and all will be well. This is to be accomplished by following what was called the Noble Eightfold Path—right belief, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right contemplation. Those who had passed through all these stages were called *Arhats.*

This "path" was far better than any men knew of in India at that time. There was attached to the system an abounding love of men. The Buddha exemplified it, and his early followers were ardent missionaries. They felt they had made a discovery and that they owed it to men far and near to proclaim it. And again, their great Teacher had been very insistent on the acceptance of a rigorous moral code. All who called themselves Buddhists were to obey five precepts—not to destroy life, not to steal, not to tell lies, not to drink intoxicating liquors, and not to be unchaste. These sound something like our Ten Commandments. They were most wholesome and have been like a sheet-anchor to the Buddhist community.

So then, while the attitude toward life was primarily pessimistic, there was a real optimism in early Buddhism. These early monks felt they had really learned the secret of doing away with misery. There is a pathos in the songs composed describing the joy which came into the lives of these men and women released from the chains of discontent and anxiety. Yes, women too, for after much persuasion, the Buddha at last and very reluctantly founded an order of women mendicants—nuns we would call them. The pathos lies in the fact that to us they seemed to have so little. Even

this little soon ran out. Not for centuries have men been able to claim that they have reached the end desired. There are no true *Arhats* today, nor in the memory of living men. The enthusiasm was comparatively short-lived and has long since disappeared.

V

And now the third of the "Signs," "All the constituents of being are without a soul." In some ways this is the most startling declaration of early Buddhism. There is no self or soul to anything. The Buddha himself laid great stress on this point; it was central for him. Try to think how the Buddha could hold fast a belief in the transmigration of souls when there was no soul to transmigrate. What he claimed was that each new birth, the rise of a new individual, was literally a new creation, if we may use that term, with this added factor, that this new individual inherited the Karma of that individual which had preceded him in the series in which he formed one link. He was just what he was because of what all the others who had preceded him were, and the one who came after him would be what he had added to the net result of the lives of all who had gone before. How long was this process to go on? Until some one should arise, join the Buddhist order, travel the noble Eightfold Path, become an *Arhat,* and thus crush all desire out of his life. Then his Karma would be used up and no more individuals would be born—the series would come to an end.

According to this scheme there could be no immortality. Each individual simply ceased to be when his life ended. He did not have a self at all, so when the bodily and mental elements which made up his life dissolved he ceased to be, "and that was the end of it." Should any individual be fortunate enough to become an *Arhat* he would thereby and at once enter *Nirvana,* even while still alive. *Nirvana* is a condition of perfect peace and calm, unruffled by any clinging after life and any of its relationships. The *Arhat* has risen sublimely above all these things and has perfect equa-

nimity and poise. His only desire is for what he now enjoys and to see others enter into his experience, but all craving and discontent are gone and gone forever. When at last he dies he enters complete *Nirvana,* which is, so far as we can make out, little better than annihilation or extinction. Since he never was a self or a soul, there can be nothing to be alive when body and mind dissolve into nothingness.

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *Is Life Worth Living?*

What makes life worth living? What is the cause when a man becomes disgusted with life and sees no good in it? How can one be an optimist when he is crippled or has lost his fortune, for neither of which he is responsible? What effect does unselfish service have on one's outlook on life?

II. *The Life of the Buddha*

Try to explain what led the Buddha to leave home and renounce his heritage. In what did his enlightenment consist? What effect would a man preaching such a gospel have upon an audience today? Why would the effect be so different?

III. *His Teaching*

What is the most striking difference between the Buddhist theories and our own? What effect on life is most significant? Compare the moral teaching of the Buddha with the Ten Commandments; with the teaching of Jesus. What do you consider the chief defect in the system of the Buddha?

(For this and the next chapter a very useful volume is that by K. J. Saunders entitled "The Story of Buddhism.")

CHAPTER V

THE WHEEL OF THE EXCELLENT LAW

The Buddha declared his purpose "to set rolling the royal chariot-wheel of a universal empire of truth and righteousness." This week we are to travel from country to country in Asia to investigate what the "Excellent Law" has done in these lands where the poorly clad, shaven-headed monks carried the message of their master. We shall doubtless be amazed to find how changed the religion has become in its travels. The Buddha essayed to found a religion with no gods and no worship. Now "gods many and lords many" are worshiped with elaborate ceremonial in the lands where Buddhism has been carried. This has led to the choice of worship as the subject of our Bible readings at the beginning of this study.

Daily Readings

First Day: The Bible takes worship for granted. The thought never seems to have occurred to any one of the writers in either the Old or New Testament that men should not pray and offer sacrifices to God.

> And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.—Gen. 4:2-4.

The author assumes the existence of altars, and of the custom of sacrifice, without giving any account of their origin.

At the close of the story of Noah and the Ark we find these interesting verses:

> And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.—Gen. 8: 20, 21.

How simple and naive the conception that God should be pleased with the sweet smell of the burnt offerings! The point to be made is that in the days of his simplicity man turned to God in worship. This is the testimony not only of the Bible but of all the archeological findings and the sacred literatures of the world. Do you think we shall ever be able to eradicate a tendency so deeply implanted in human nature?

SECOND DAY: Abraham was a very religious man. He has been called the Friend of God and the Father of the Faithful. As soon as he had reached the land of promise he performed a religious act.

> And he removed from thence unto the mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Ai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah.—Gen. 12: 8.

The great test of Abraham's faith came late in life when he was commanded to offer his son Isaac on an altar.

> And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.—Gen. 22: 1, 2.

Back of this lesson of obedience and faith is the historical fact that human sacrifice was known in Abraham's day and that with the testing of his faith came the setting aside of

this horrid custom. We find then how God leads His people out of crude conceptions of Himself and of what pleases Him.

THIRD DAY:

> Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing loving-kindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.—Exodus 20: 4-6.

In the long second commandment, which was such a terror for us to learn exactly before we reached our teens, worship again is taken for granted, only the Hebrews were told not to worship images. Their God was a jealous God who alone must be worshiped. He desired the entire devotion of His people; He expected them to worship Him and not be led into the devious paths of idolatry.

Does it strike you as strange that the same Ten Commandments which warn against sins of robbery, adultery, and murder should include a command relative to worship? Is there any connection between high moral living and worship? Is it safe, to say the least, for a man to give up prayer and the service of God's house?

FOURTH DAY: The Psalms are full of the spirit of praise and worship. Try to enter into the spirit of these men whose words we read today.

> How amiable are thy tabernacles,
> O Jehovah of hosts!
> My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah;
> My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.
> —Psalm 84: 1, 2.

These were the days when the Temple was in its glory. The external beauty of the building may be more in evidence than is possible with us, but even a simple, rustic church may have for us memories which make it a sacred place.

FIFTH DAY: The danger of what is merely external in worship was as evident in the Old Testament days as now.

> I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.—Amos 5: 21-24.

What a condemnation heaped upon men who had trodden on the rights of the poor and had forgotten the great precepts of the moral law, yet were impudently performing all the sacred offices of religious worship! Strenuous moral endeavor is a necessary foundation of sincere worship.

Toward the end of the wonderful Psalm of penitence come these words of a truly worshipful heart:

> O Lord, open thou my lips;
> And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.
> For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:
> Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
> A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.—Psalm 51: 15-17.

The inwardness of true worship is here made very clear. Our worship must spring from the heart, which realizes what it means to be in the presence of the loving God who is at the same time pure and holy.

SIXTH DAY: Jesus inherited the spirit of devotion and worship from the Old Testament and filled it with a new meaning. Read His answer when the temptation came to win the kingdoms of the world by prostrating Himself and worshiping the Tempter.

> Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.—Matt. 4: 10.

Luke gives a glimpse of Jesus' habits as a young man.

> And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day.—Luke 4: 16.

"As his custom was," He entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Why do you suppose He made this His custom? Why wouldn't it have been just as helpful to stay away from public worship and meditate and pray alone?

SEVENTH DAY: Jesus inculcated worship both by precept and example. He was also very particular about the motives and the spirit of worship.

> Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner. I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke 18: 10-14.

Of what use are prayer and fasting and tithing in a self-

righteous man like that Pharisee? How could a man keep from prayer who is in the condition of the publican?

Jesus has another remarkable word about the nature of true worship:

> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.—John 4:24.

True worship is "in spirit and truth." "In spirit" means that it is spiritual worship, the communion of one spiritual being with another, the Spirit of God in touch with the spirit of man. Moffatt translates the other Greek word not as "truth" but as "reality." The true worship is sincere, the genuine expression of our real selves to God. Could any definition of worship be more searching than that contained in these words of Jesus?

Study for the Week

I

Japan, Korea, China, Mongolia, Tibet, Siam, Burma, and Ceylon—all these are Buddhist to a greater or less extent, but what a strange Buddhism as contrasted with that of the great Gautama! He could not believe his eyes were he to awake and see what is being said and done in his name. So great is the divergence from the original teaching and so varied are the views and practices of Buddhism in different lands at the present time that the question may be seriously asked, what is Buddhism? What right have all these differing and even antagonistic beliefs to the common name of the founder?

All Buddhists have certain things in common. They all realize and are proud of the fact that the movement to which they belong had its earthly origin in the life and work of Gautama Buddha. They are inspired by the unsullied record of a pure, unselfish life devoted to the good of others. There is an intellectual and spiritual atmosphere typical of all lands which have been influenced by Buddhism. Asia is still

haunted by the sense of the impermanence of all things which the Buddha taught. Man's sorrow in being bound fast to the ceaseless wheel of transmigration in accordance with the inexorable law of Karma is as much in evidence today as five hundred years before our era. A kind of world-weariness, settling down into a wistful pessimism, is an inescapable mark of Buddhism's presence. These are moods of the soul as much as definite doctrines, but they are quite as useful to us in putting our finger on what a religion really is as are written creeds and rituals. They have indelibly marked all these strangely variant communities as being in the true succession of the great founder, Gautama Buddha.

II

Almost immediately after his death legends began to accumulate about the birth and personal history of the Buddha. He came to be regarded as "omniscient and absolutely sinless," claims which he never made for himself. Then came the belief that he was born of a virgin and this was expanded to include her spotlessness, too. "At the conception of the Buddha, thirty-two signs take place; the 10,000 worlds are filled with light, the blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the crooked become straight, the lame walk, the imprisoned are set free, and so on, all nature blooming, and all beings in earth and heaven being filled with joy; while by a bold figure of speech even the fires of hell are extinguished, and the tortures of the damned are mitigated." From the beginning to the end of the life of this prodigy such wonders and many more like them accompany his steps.

Is there any wonder, then, that the Buddha should be worshiped? But could anything stranger than this complete turning of the tables be imagined? He who deprecated all belief in the gods and scouted any suggestion of worship, himself the object of worship! What the Buddha had attempted was an impossibility. "'Never mind about the gods!' said Gautama. 'We cannot help minding,' replied the heart

of India." Only a very limited circle during his own day and the years immediately following really held the doctrine taught by the Buddha.

Gautama was soon said to be only one of a long series of Buddhas, each new Buddha having been needed to restore the purity of a faith well nigh lost. Twenty-four of these were named who had preceded Gautama, and after five thousand more years another was to come, Maitreya Buddha, the Buddha of kindness, who would restore all things—someone like the Messiah of the Jews. The air began to swarm with spiritual beings. They were called Bodhisattvas, beings who in the unseen world had not arrived at complete enlightenment and were postponing their final emancipation in order to help men here below. They, too, could be worshiped, so that this religion rapidly became polytheistic. And when after some time images were made and set up in temples, Buddhism became one of the most idolatrous of all the religions of the world.

We can account for the changes partly by the suggestion already made—the natural reaction of the human spirit against a prayerless, godless creed, which could never satisfy more than a few intellectuals who had come under the magic influence of the Buddha's personality. But this does not explain all. Another cause was at work whose influence must have been tremendous. Within the first few centuries this new faith came in contact with alien peoples, some of whom already lived on the borders of India in the foothills of the Himalayas, while others were wild Mongolian tribes who came pouring into India from the northwest. These rude nomads brought with them notions which they would not cast aside when they embraced the religion of the mild and gentle Buddha. No theory of the non-existence of the soul could ever hold them. They were vigorous as the Hindus were dreamy, and this robustness influenced the Buddhism of all the northern countries. Nirvana, with its annihilation of conscious existence, held out no pleasurable anticipations to them. They pushed it aside and found more

to their taste a heaven of bliss where beyond the western mountains they might enjoy the rewards of a virtuous life. And to correspond to this paradise they could find nothing to object to in a hell where the wicked were tortured in a most realistic fashion.

Out of all the confusion occasioned by this unparalleled development two distinct schools of thought were at last evolved. Those who departed most widely from the master's teaching called their doctrine the *Mahayana,* or the Great Vehicle. They claimed not to be held by the narrowness of their more conservative brethren, who would not accept all the features of the newer doctrines we have just been outlining. These conservatives became the type of the Buddhists of the south. They were called the *Hinayana,* or the Lesser Vehicle, by their northern co-religionists, who used this name as a term of reproach.

III

The Buddhism of southern Asia, the *Hinayana,* is to be found in Burma and Siam, and the beautiful Island of Ceylon. Buddhism has had a most interesting history in the island. The cult of relics soon sprang up, a collar bone of Gautama and one of his teeth being held in great reverence. The most noted temple in the island is that of the "Holy Tooth," which, by the way, is larger than a horse's tooth! "By dim, uncertain lamplight the doors of the casket are opened for the faithful to see it, and amid the benumbing perfume of countless flowers (which are brought here daily as offerings) the devotee kneels before it and allows his uncritical gaze to fall upon what may rather be imagined than actually seen."

A sad fact is that the intellectual and moral level of the monks is low. There are splendid men who form an exception to this rule, but the average monk leads an idle life, performing his religious duties in a purely perfunctory way. There are those who represent a reform movement, striving after "a purer, more inward Buddhism, one more in accordance, in many respects, with European taste." They have in-

troduced preaching halls and sermons and a recitation of a creed. There is also a European influence seeking to bring about an understanding of essential, primitive Buddhism, from which the practice even in Ceylon has so widely departed.

Unfortunately the ordinary man and woman has not been made deeply Buddhist. His religion is a matter of observances, with much superstition mixed in. Reading the sacred books "is a kind of charm which brings a blessing by the mere reading and hearing, even although utterly unintelligible to the hearer, and which averts illness and exorcises evil spirits." What really controls the inner life of the people is their ancient nature and demon worship. The people live conscious of the presence and influence of these spirits, who are seeking to bring evil upon them. Here in Ceylon is where Buddhism is found in its purest form, yet it is unable really to lift the people into peace and freedom.

In Burma much the same conditions exist, except that the religion has penetrated more deeply into the life of the people. The whole education of the people is in the hands of the Buddhist monks. That has given them enormous influence and power. Further it is customary in Burma for a young man to devote a certain period of his youth to the monastic life. Everywhere the landscape is studded with the graceful pagodas containing relics of the Buddha and other holy men. "Anyone who has seen the golden pagoda at Rangoon shimmering in the moonlight will no longer wonder that Buddhism appeals to the people. Moonlight in Burma is almost intoxicating to the senses." Naturally happy and light-hearted, the Burmese have not allowed the pessimism of their religion to cloud their festive occasions. What a paradox to see these people worship at these times and repeat the creed of Buddhism, "All is impermanent, all is suffering, all is unreal," and then belie its whole spirit and spend the night in merry-making!

Their Buddhism is strangely mixed with the propitiation of *nats,* the old sprites of their pre-Buddhist native worship.

These *nats* are more real to them than the Buddhas. "A Burman with childish inconsistency will sacrifice animals to the *nats* and drink spirits in their honor—committing the two worst sins in the Buddhist decalogue." They are Buddhists, to be sure, but what shall we say of a religion whose adherents treat so lightly the teachings of their creed?

IV

The Buddhism of China, Korea, and Japan is in a class by itself. The religion in these countries, particularly in Japan, has departed farther from the teaching of Gautama Buddha than in any other. In China Buddhism came into contact with the dominant Confucianism and has never been able to dislodge it. The chief reason why Buddhism was able to get any hold on the Chinese at all was that it provided, in its *Mahayana* form, a spiritual faith with worship of gods worthy of their adoration and a belief in a blessed immortality.

The religion has suffered greatly from persecution in the course of its history. The backbone of Buddhism has always been the monks and the monasteries. Without these Buddhism could not continue to exist. To the practical Chinese there is something incongruous in seeing tens and even hundreds of thousands of men and women separating themselves from productive occupations and living upon the benefactions of the populace. It was even more repugnant to Chinese feeling for these men and women to repudiate family life and live as celibates. Monasticism was a body blow at ancestor worship, which lays a duty on every man to have at least one son to carry on the worship of the family ancestors. The ranks of the monks are recruited from children, some even being bought from poor people to fill up the needed quota. For the most part the monks lead lazy, useless lives.

Despite all this the people come to the monks for all kinds of help. Buddhism promises to deliver them from the pains of hell. Even educated men and officials who are proud Confucianists and would feel humiliated to have it known,

go in secret to these monks. Yet they go, not because of any Buddhist convictions or because they wish to be adherents of the faith, but simply because it is the only way they know to supply certain needs they feel in their lives. The only real Buddhists in China who should be counted as such in the census report are the monks.

Japan is a Buddhist country and the religion is alive and active. Instead of meeting a resolute antagonist as it did in China, Buddhism swallowed Shintoism, the ancient faith of Japan, and all but completely assimilated it. Japanese Buddhism came from China, as we have seen, and is much like that of the older country. The most marked feature of the religion in Japan is its sectarianism. These sects are something like the denominations in our Protestantism. The earliest sects were imported from China, but Japan herself has developed this feature of her religious life to a far greater extent than China. In several of these sects we have the farthest departure from the teaching of the Buddha and of the original faith to be found anywhere. The one which has the largest following in the country is the Shin sect. It has gone the full length of declaring that salvation can come only by faith in Amida, the ruler of the western Paradise. This sounds like our doctrine of "justification by faith" and it is like it, with this important difference, that Amida is a mere figment of the imagination, while Jesus Christ is a historical character. This Shin sect is the progressive sect in Japan, using western methods and being missionary in spirit. They have opened preaching halls and have services on Sundays. They conduct Sunday schools, have organized Young Men's Buddhist Associations, and issue books and periodicals from the press.

But unfortunately the monks even in this sect are not highly respected. Of course there are splendid exceptions, but among the educated classes in Japan Buddhism is not in high favor. The common people are not concerned about philosophical Buddhism and the ancient literature. The idea of transmigration has taken firm hold and dominates

their thinking. The educated who are Buddhists look down on the superstitious observances of the common people and construct their own system in harmony with modern science and philosophy.

V

What shall we say of Buddhism in a closing word? Original Buddhism as taught by Gautama can never become, as it never has been, the religion of any people. It is too subtle and intellectualistic for that. Then, by trying to suppress the instinct to worship, it ran counter to what is a necessary feature of the religion of all save a few cultured individuals at the top. This has been proved over and over again in the history of the religion. When we consider the form taken by Buddhism in Asia today, the sad fact which emerges is that it has failed to root out the puerile superstitions of the Animism which preceded it; and thus no land is truly Buddhist. What must we say of a religion which after over two millenniums has not been able to make its own standards and beliefs in any complete way the belief and practice of any people? Do the defects lie in the religion itself or in abuses and misunderstandings? What is the verdict of its history?

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *Religion and Worship*

Consider the relation of worship and social service. Why spend time in worship when so much need abounds on every side? What is the chief danger in worship? How can worship be kept vital and significant?

II. *The Buddha Is Worshiped*

How can this innovation be accounted for? Can a religion exist without some form of worship? Give reasons for your answer. Get clearly in mind the difference between the later Buddhism and the earlier. In what ways can the

Buddha be said to be the founder of both forms? Which one is the more adequate as a religion? For what reasons?

III. *Buddhism as a Present-day Force*

What is the condition of Buddhism in the various Buddhist countries today? How do you account for the condition? What is needed to make it an effective moral and social force? Is there hope that such a change can be effected? What is your reason for thinking so?

CHAPTER VI

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

Ancestor worship is said to be the real religion of China. Chinese society, even Chinese civilization as a whole, is built upon the foundation of the family. The Emperor, in all ages of Chinese history, has been looked upon as the Father of his people. The Christian idea of the family is a growth of centuries and only through the appearance of Jesus Christ did the noblest conception of the family and the relationship of members in it find a voice. Let us look at that development in the readings this week.

Daily Readings

First Day: The picture of the family presented in the Old Testament is badly marred. Polygamy was accepted as a normal relationship by everyone who could afford to support more than one wife. Divorce was easy for a man to secure for any one of a number of reasons, reasons which the Christian conscience cannot allow today. So long as these wrongs continued to exist, woman could never come to her own.

But even in those days there was a higher ideal. Read the account of the creation of woman in the second chapter of Genesis, remembering that it is an ideal rather than literal history.

> And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the

man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.—Gen. 2: 21-24.

Do you think this ideal of marriage could be fulfilled if a man should have more than one wife?

Second Day: With all the Jewish people lacked in Old Testament days, they were far ahead of their neighbors. There was a purity in the family not to be found among other peoples. Children were taught to obey their parents.

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.—Exodus 20: 12.

A more detailed picture of the dutiful son is given in Proverbs.

My son, keep the commandment of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:
Bind them continually upon thy heart;
Tie them about thy neck.
When thou walkest, it shall lead thee;
When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee;
And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.—
Prov. 6: 20-22.

Women were held in high honor. Beautiful pictures are presented of the worthy woman and her place in the family.

A worthy woman who can find?
For her price is far above rubies.
The heart of her husband trusteth in her,
And he shall have no lack of gain.
She doeth him good and not evil
All the days of her life.—Prov. 31: 10-12.

Third Day: Ascetic ideas concerning marriage cannot be justifiably derived from Jesus' words and attitude. Read the

account of the wedding at Cana, where His desire that the joy of the occasion should not be broken took so remarkable a turn.

> And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it. And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now.—John 2: 1-10.

This simple and beautiful picture should be in the mind of anyone who desires to understand Jesus' whole attitude toward marriage and the relationships of the home. Jesus did not fail them. How could He, when He entered so heartily into the significance of such an occasion?

Fourth Day: But Jesus was exceedingly severe in His condemnation of certain practices of His day relative to marriage. He knew quite well the passage from Deuteronomy on which the practice of divorce was based:

> When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall

write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.—Deut. 24: 1-2.

Now read the words of Jesus when the Pharisees came to Him about this matter:

And there came unto him Pharisees, trying him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.—Matt. 19: 3-9.

Fifth Day: In all his dealing with the question of the family, Paul is attempting to apply the meaning of Jesus' words as to the details of family life. His position was immeasurably ahead of the age in which he lived. In principle he was entirely with his Master. The complete equality of all "in Christ Jesus" is most clearly stated.

There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus.—Gal. 3: 28.

Now read the classic passage on the relation of husband and wife as he interprets it from a Christian viewpoint.

> Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church. . . . But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies.—Eph. 5:22-28.

Mutual love and thoughtfulness mark the relationship, which is so close that Paul likens it to that between Christ and the Church. Can we do anything better today than go back to this passage from Paul to get the most beautiful and highest interpretation of the meaning of Christian marriage?

SIXTH DAY: Paul dealt with other family matters, especially the relation of children and parents.

> Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged.—Col. 3:20, 21.

Obedience is the rule for children. There was nothing new about that. The new feature which has come into the world through Christianity is that fathers are bound to respect their children. It was Jesus who discovered and sanctified childhood.

SEVENTH DAY: Paul says even more about the relation of servants and their masters, probably because it was the more necessary.

> Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.—Eph. 6: 5-9.

We do not have servants today in the sense Paul here has in mind. As the margin tells us, they are "bondservants," slaves, as we should speak of them. Faithfulness on the part of all who serve, and kindly consideration on the part of employers—how far do these prevail today?

Study for the Week

I

Who is not interested in China these days? The oldest nation in existence, whose origin nobody knows; the largest number of people in any country in the world; a people just waking to its opportunity and asking admittance to the modern family of nations—is there not good reason to be intent on what is happening there? Conservatism has long been a mark of everything Chinese. To do things as they were done in the good old days of Yao and Shun, who are supposed to have ruled China more than 2,200 years before Christ, was considered a signal mark of orthodoxy and of loyalty to China and her institutions. The revolution in 1911 accomplished the first radical change in the form of government since the year 221 B.C. China has waked up to the fact that all she has, her national integrity included, depends for its preservation on the adoption of western

methods. Many blunders are being made, but the eye of sympathy is able to discern through all the confusion the steady purpose to make China worthy of the glorious traditions of the past.

A China completely renovated is the ideal which they have set before them. This, of course, includes religion. With a people whose hold on the past is so tenacious, it is impossible to believe that the past will not be strong enough to be a dominant influence in the religion of the future. Even with the coming of Christianity the break cannot and ought not to be complete.

II

What is the religion of the Chinese? The answer which comes immediately is that the Chinese are for the most part Confucianists, Taoists (pronounced Dowists), and Buddhists, with a plentiful sprinkling of Mohammedans. Confucianism and Taoism were not known until the 6th century before Christ, and Buddhism was not brought in until the first century of our era. What was the religion of China during the centuries, even millenniums before that? The practices and the beliefs which prevailed in the earliest days persist even down to the present time. Here again we see the fundamental conservatism of the Chinese people. What is it that lies back of the formulated religions and in many ways dominates them now?

What we find in the earliest day, what we find today, is an undercurrent of belief in a great number of spirits and demons. There are millions of them, they are everywhere, no one can escape them. These spirits are good and bad, strong and weak. The shining sun over head, the source of all material good, is looked upon as a good spirit and everything connected with him as effective to drive out demons. So, when a boatman starts down the dangerous rapids of the Yangtze, it is not an uncommon thing for him to kill a cock and let its blood drip into the rushing waters. Since the crowing of

the cock heralds the rising of the sun, there must be some efficacy in sacrificing the fowl itself.

Yet very unfortunately the bad spirits occupy the attention of the Chinese more than the good spirits. He lives in fear that these imps will bring him ill luck in any one of a hundred forms. He wants to neutralize their influence and looks on religion as a means to that end. The religion of a Chinese is very largely a means of securing material blessings and of averting physical disaster and inconvenience. He lives in dread of smallpox and famine and fires and floods. There have always been some earnest, wistful souls, but this describes few, very few, of the Chinese. The average Chinese looks on religion as a doctor called in when things go wrong.

The most common form of appeal to spirits is the worship of ancestors. It is a real worship—no sham, no mere reverence. The thought lying back of ancestor worship is that death does not break up the family; that the dead Chinese is alive, and is as much a part of the family as he was before. J. Dyer Ball, in one of his books, has a chapter on "The Life of a Dead Chinaman." Not only is he alive and a member of the family, he is the most important member of the family. Family plans must be made with the dead in view, rather than the living. They must receive offerings or they may do great injury. The tablets to ancestors have their place in every Chinese house on the god-shelf. So ancestor worship, which in the beginning may have sprung out of love and reverence and which doubtless is influenced by these feelings today, has as its dominant motive the fear of offending the spirits of the departed.

III

Up to this time we have been looking at the religion of the masses of the people. But even in the earliest day of which we can know anything there was another very important side to Chinese religion. Based on the same animistic foundation, there has always been an elaborate worship of the higher

forces and powers of nature, the climax of which is the worship of Heaven. The over-arching Heaven in all its magnificence has been worshiped from time immemorial. At the dead of night, the longest night of the year, the Emperor of China has from the earliest times proceeded to the Temple of Heaven and there under the open sky, with no shelter whatsoever and in the light of flaming torches, has offered sacrifice to the great Shang-ti, as Heaven is called. He is assisted by a large company of his courtiers, yet the worship is his own. He alone of all Chinese has the right to offer this sacrifice, but he does it as the representative of his people. The patriarchal idea runs through the entire scheme of this state religion. He worships *for* his people.

The elaborate ceremonial connected with the worship of Heaven is carried out on the night of the winter solstice. On this night the forces of darkness and cold, having had full sway for six months, begin to retire before the forces of light and summer heat. Many weary weeks of cold and snow may intervene, but from this night the days begin to grow longer and the coming of the spring is only a matter of time. Like the religion of the masses of the people, this worship is directed toward material benefits and for China alone. With all its magnificence it is narrow and selfish. How different China is from India! There we find people spiritually inclined; here a practical people intent on securing material benefits. It is worthy of comment that Yuan Shih-kai, the late President of the Republic, continued to offer sacrifice to Heaven as the representative of the people, and the late President Li Yuan-hung stated that he would do likewise.

IV

It has been emphasized that every feature of the religion of China existed and was in full operation before any of the formal religions were known or their prophets had been born. Each of these religions made a contribution to Chinese life, but did not alter the foundations.

Confucius lived from 551 to 478 B.C. His life was spent in North China during the days of feudalism. Many petty princes vied with each other and scarcely acknowledged the right of the emperor, who was but little stronger than some of the princes. Confucius was born in the state of Lu. When a man he was given an official position and succeeded so splendidly that the state of Lu became the envy of the adjacent states. The prince of one of them determined to end this prosperity and did so by sending to the Prince of Lu a present of fine horses and dancing girls. In spite of all Confucius could do the prince gave himself to pleasure instead of the affairs of state. The result was demoralization, and Confucius lost his position. Then began many years of wanderings, visiting the capital of state after state, seeking to induce the prince to employ him, with the assurance that prosperity would come if only his methods were followed. Not one prince was convinced and Confucius was compelled to return to his old home and retire from public life. Here for many years, with his disciples gathered around him, the old sage laid down his rules of life and compiled the books which have come down to us bearing his name.

Confucius added nothing to the religious life of China, and, although the state religion is frequently called by his name, he did nothing to change its form or give it direction. What Confucius did was to give China its ethical code. Yet even here he disclaimed all right to be called an originator, preferring to be known as a transmitter of the heritage of bygone ages. Yet he did put the stamp of his personality and ideas on China so effectively that China is still the workmanship of the great Teacher.

To Confucius the individual was of little value, and then only as a link in a chain or as a factor in the life of the state. Man must live in relationships, and the relationships seem to be more important than the people who are held together by them. The ancients knew what was good better than we do, so the orthodox thing was to fill one's appointed place and hope for nothing more. We may see how this

works out in his teaching of the "Five Relations," those of father and son, ruler and subject, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, friend and friend. In each pair there is a superior and an inferior, one who had the right to issue orders and one whose duty was to obey.

A wife is considered inferior to her husband. Her duty is obedience, her function is to raise up sons to continue the family line and to offer ancestral sacrifice after the parents have passed on. "Of all the sins a man could commit," said Mencius, "the greatest is not to have sons." But suppose a man should have no sons, what then? Either he must adopt a son or he must bring in another wife. Thus polygamy follows in the train of the idea of family solidarity. Woman suffers most, being looked upon as a mere means to an end. She has little value in herself; only on becoming the mother of a son and because of that fact does she have any real place in Chinese life. A child has no rights in China; the rights belong to the parents. So it has always been, and it is exceedingly difficult to change. In this and in every other respect, the old beaten tracks have been the accepted modes of procedure, and change has been scouted as an intolerable outrage.

While Confucius was a teacher of morals, his name is now used to cover the state religion, as well as the popular worship of the people. Temples by the thousands are to be found filled with images to all sorts of deities. Gods of the earth and of wealth, patron divinities and benefactors, gods to cure illnesses, gods who are patrons of various callings, and so through a long list, are worshiped everywhere in the Empire. The temples are the center of the religious life, but religious rites are also performed in the homes of the people. Side by side with the ancestral tablets are little images of the special gods worshiped, or written characters which represent them. Cash or incense or tea are offered before any request is made. The saddest thing about it all is that everything connected with the worship is so selfish and on so low a material and physical plane.

V

A little before the period of Confucius' greatest activity, there lived a great teacher in North China whose name was Laocius. Little is known of him. He wrote a short but very enigmatical book called the "Tao Te King" (pronounced Dow Day Ging) which represents a high idealism. The great theme of the book is the Tao. But what is Tao? Many, many definitions have been given, and often they are very far apart. Here is one: Tao is "the eternal and ubiquitous impersonal principle by which the universe has been produced and is supported and governed." The practical purpose of Laocius' book is to induce men to follow the example of Tao. We are to be imitators of the "Way," the "orderly processes of nature," or whatever it is, and thus fulfil our destiny.

The imitation of Tao being the leading idea, and Tao being looked upon as impersonal and eternally quiescent, the outcome was a philosophy of inactivity. No wonder Confucius and Laocius could not understand each other; they were at opposite poles of thought. Confucius was the apostle of activity and eager striving, Laocius the philosopher of quietism. Confucius was the maker of China, while Laocius is remembered only as an impractical dreamer.

Yet Taoism is one of the religions of China, and a strange religion it is. "Instead of limiting itself to the mysticism of its master, and pursuing his reasonable speculations, it gave itself up, at an early date, to the magical side of Chinese philosophy and practice." While no silly practices can be laid at the door of the mystical Laocius, his successors are reputed to have been able to do marvelous deeds, such as walking through the solid rock, leaping off precipices with no injury, and walking through fire unscathed. Many tried to acquire wisdom and immortality by physical means. A pill of immortality is mentioned, and men attempted to become ethereal by starving themselves into insensibility. The Taoist priests of today are experts in all kinds of magical

and demonic lore. They impose on the people in a hundred ways, amazing them by walking up a ladder of swords, and pushing needles through their cheeks, wandering through the streets in this gruesome fashion.

The ignorant people resort to these charlatans in all their troubles, to expel demons of cholera, to give them good luck in business, to choose the correct site for a new house, to determine when a dead body should be buried, and to meet a hundred other wants of a people eaten up with dread and fear of the malign influence of ten thousand evil spirits. The secret societies to be found everywhere in China are of Taoist origin. The Boxers who terrorized north China in 1900 and massacred so many native Christians and missionaries were under Taoist influences. "Thousands and hundreds of thousands believed that, possessed of Taoist charms, weapons could not harm them, and that the horsehair whip blessed by the priest could turn back upon the marksman the bullet he fired."

VI

Buddhism, as we have seen in the previous study, came into China in the first century of our era. At the present time it is a pitiable remnant of a departed glory. Buddhist monasteries are often found in places of great natural beauty. Buddhist temples abound, but, like everything in China, look dusty and dingy. This religion is able to exist today because it has a message not contained in other religions. Poor as it may seem, there is a spiritual element in Buddhism. Immortality is vividly depicted and the help of the Buddhas is assured. The Chinese are in sore need of just this element, and with all their abhorrence of monasticism and its idle unproductivity, they have had an ear for a message which has come to them through this channel alone. When a Chinese feels the solemn issues of life and death, he will listen to a Buddhist monk and take what comfort he can from the promises of help and the prospect of immortality which come from these imported gods of India.

Finally, these three religions supplement one another. They answer to varying moods of the Chinese soul. Taoism deals with the fear and superstitions of the present life; Buddhism with death and what is beyond death; while Confucianism, as enunciated by the sage, furnishes the rule of everyday life. All Chinese are Taoists, Buddhists, and Confucianists as occasion demands—they are not mutually exclusive.

A great change is taking place in China. The political revolution is but an outward evidence of a profound inner development. For a people as remarkable as the Chinese, the religions of the country are singularly inadequate. What other nations have long since left behind as unfit for the advancing civilization of the new times, China with a kind of instinctive conservatism has held fast to with bull-dog tenacity. But now she is letting go, and is willing to be taught of the West.

With all that China needs, the former President of the Republic, Yuan Shih-kai, placed his finger on one of the weakest spots in all Chinese life. At the close of a conversation with Dr. John R. Mott, the President made the statement that he saw this great difference between Christianity and Confucianism, that, while in China they had splendid ideals, Christianity was unique in that it possessed a power which made it possible for men to accomplish what the religion laid down as a duty. How great is the need in China just now for such a dynamic!

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *The Family and Religion*

What differences exist between the Old and New Testaments with respect to the family? What can be gathered relative to the place of children in Jesus' estimate, from His treatment of them? What are the characteristics of a Christian home?

II. *Religion in Its Beginnings*

What kind of a religion did China have to start with?

Why were not the people allowed to worship the great gods of the state? What led the people to worship their ancestors? What effect has this worship had on Chinese society? In what respects was this early religion lacking?

III. *Developed Religion*

Contrast the contribution of the two great leaders, Confucius and Laocius. Why did Confucius gain the ascendency over the people? State the strong and weak points in his ethical system. What lack still remained which Buddhism filled? Why was Buddhism persecuted? State what you consider the religious needs of China today.

(A helpful volume for further study will be found in "The Historical Development of Religion in China," by W. J. Clennell.)

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION AND PATRIOTISM

Japan is above everything else patriotic. Separated from the mainland of Asia and yet in touch with its civilization, sharing many features of their life with their continental neighbors and yet considering themselves superior to them, the people of the Island Empire of the East have developed an intense nationalism. Loyalty is the word printed large over everything Japanese. So deeply is Japanese religion impregnated with this spirit that religion means little more than patriotism to many of the people today.

The Bible readings for this week are selected to present the attitude of the biblical writers toward nationality and loyalty to country. They present some of the general principles which do not change, dealing with what we might call the foundations of a prosperous and lasting state.

Daily Readings

First Day: The Hebrew state was founded on a covenant, an agreement between God and the nation, according to which each accepted certain responsibilities and was to be the recipient of a certain recognition on the part of the other. The beginnings were in the days when God entered into such a compact with Abraham, the Father of the Faithful.

> And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations.—Gen. 17: 1-4.

Can you wonder that this nation, thus founded on God's promise, should have looked on its history as sacred and a glorious destiny as sure?

SECOND DAY: The covenant made with Abraham was renewed with the Israelites through Moses at Sinai. Here quite explicitly the conditional nature of the obligation resting on God is stated.

> And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. . . . And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do. And Moses reported the words of the people unto Jehovah.—Exodus 19:3-6, 8.

The responsibility assumed by the people was that they should obey God's voice and thus keep the covenant. The Hebrew nation was founded on strict moral principles. Can a nation hope to continue and be prosperous which is not founded on these same ethical principles?

THIRD DAY: When, a few years later, the people had passed through the desert and were ready to settle down in the Promised Land which they had partially conquered, Joshua summons them together and renews the covenant.

> And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins. If ye forsake Jehovah, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after

> that he hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve Jehovah. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you Jehovah, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he, the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.—Josh. 24: 19-25.

Here the condition laid down is that the people were to be loyal to Jehovah and to him alone. What application can this have to the life of nations today? Does it touch the continuance of China and Japan as nations?

FOURTH DAY: What connection can there be between the observance of the Jewish Sabbath and the preservation of the Jewish state?

> And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith Jehovah, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but to hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter in by the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. . . . But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden and enter in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.—Jer. 17: 24, 25, 27.

How different is our attitude toward the Sabbath, or even Sunday, our day of rest and worship! Jesus' words relative

to its observance have changed our whole outlook. The Sabbath, according to Jesus, is our servant—it was made for our use. But must there not be in national life some recognition of God and of our obligation to Him? Are we in any less need of such recognition than the Jews?

FIFTH DAY: The day came when the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken away captive, only to be followed after about a hundred years by her southern sister Judah. What was the reason for allowing them to be plunged into such misery? The inner life of these people was rotten. Social injustice and flagrant immorality were eating out the life of the nation. Stability could come only by mending their ways and living righteously.

> Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land. There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood.—Hos. 4: 1-2.
>
> Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.—Jer. 7: 3.

SIXTH DAY: Nationality was to Israel so absorbing and uplifting a conception that her sweetest singers return often to bless Jehovah for His goodness.

> God be merciful unto us, and bless us,
> And cause his face to shine upon us;
> That thy way may be known upon earth,
> Thy salvation among all nations.
> Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
> Let all the peoples praise thee.—Psalm 67: 1-3.

The psalmist has in this song touched on a broad theme. We are but beginning to catch its significance now—that all nations belong to God, that all have their contribution to make

to the world's life, and that, therefore, all should be respected and all should be mutually helpful.

SEVENTH DAY: Little is said about nationality in the New Testament. The Roman Empire was the dominant political feature of the age, and it was simply taken for granted by New Testament writers. The general attitude was one of gratitude that peace and order were insured by so powerful a government. Only in the Book of Revelation, after Rome began to persecute the Christians, is there resentment and bitter denunciation of the powers in control. But when Paul wrote his letter to the Roman Church, he expressed himself strongly on the duty of Christians toward the government.

> Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. . . . Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.—Rom. 13: 1, 7.

This was high ground to take—a pagan power "ordained of God." Wherever order is maintained and justice is administered in the world today, there in Paul's view is a divine institution worthy of respect and rightly demanding obedience.

STUDY FOR THE WEEK

I

What is to become of Japan? This question is of large significance when we consider the dominant place Japan has been occupying in the Eastern world. The entrance of Japan into the family of nations during the last fifty years is one of the marvels of the history of civilization, and her future is a matter of deep concern to all who are interested in world problems. It is fitting that we ask about her religious life, for only by so doing shall we understand the

Japanese and penetrate to the heart of the motives and fears and hopes which actuate her as a nation.

Japan's own contribution to her religious life has been meager. What she has received from others has been far greater in bulk and more significant in many ways than her own original deposit. Yet Japan has always put her own stamp on whatever she has received, adapting it to her purposes and fitting it into her own characteristic mold. There is never any difficulty in identifying anything Japanese—it is her own and no one can mistake it.

II

The primitive religion of Japan was puny and simple, as compared with the additions later made. But while this is so, we must look well at this original deposit, for without a clear understanding of its meaning one of the most important clues to the whole subsequent development would be lacking.

Japan's early religion has been called Shinto, or Shintoism. It is today listed as one of the three religions of Japan, Buddhism and Confucianism being the other two. Shinto is a borrowed Chinese word whose Japanese equivalent is *Kami-no-michi,* which means in English "the way of the gods." The clue to the whole system, if it can be dignified by such a designation, is the word *Kami.* What does this word translated "gods" really mean? In its simplest signification it means "what is above." But this meaning grew until *Kami* came to signify "any object or natural phenomenon that might arouse the feelings of wonder, awe, or reverence." It is quite clear that this simple religion was a form of animism or nature worship. The particular quality or feature which led to the worship of any object as a *Kami* was power. The Japanese felt himself to be in the presence of beings stronger than himself, on whom he was dependent and to whom he should offer worship. This worship was most simple—never was there a form of worship more unpretentious. There was no doctrine and no code of morals. At a

later period a Japanese writer naively explained that while other peoples might need rules and regulations to keep them decent, the Japanese were different, all they had to do was to follow the natural bent of their hearts and they would not go astray!

Closely connected with this worship of nature and growing out of it was ancestor worship, which still prevails everywhere in Japan. Every house has its god shelf, on which offerings are placed to ancestors as well as gods. The theory back of all the thoughts the Japanese have had about themselves is that they are a special creation of the gods. The central nerve of this belief about themselves is that the imperial line is descended from their first Emperor, Jimmu Tenno, who is said to have begun to reign 660 B.C., and who was a direct descendant of the sun goddess, Amaterasu-no-Miya. A most remarkable fact about the dynasty which occupies the Japanese throne is that it has provided an unbroken line of emperors from the earliest day to the present. The ruling Emperor, Yoshihito, is said to be the one hundred and twenty-second in the direct line of descent. No other imperial family in the whole history of the world can show such a record.

But what has this to do with religion? Much in every way. There has always existed in Japan a reverence for the imperial house and throne, which has amounted almost, if not fully, to worship. Despite all the changes of the centuries and the flood of foreign beliefs and practices which have poured into their land, the Japanese have never lost this sense of reverential attachment and worshipful allegiance to the imperial line. This Japan did not receive from abroad; it is indigenous and original, and in many ways has been determinative of her history and character. The Japanese are first of all patriotic, loyal to the ruling dynasty. They are proud of their descent, of their history and their country, but most of all of the person, the divine person, who rules over them in perfect security and with no fear.

As the late Dr. Knox happily put it, everything in the

ancient religion might be summed up in the injunction, "Fear the gods and obey the Emperor." He speaks of this primitive Shinto as "essentially nature worship, married to the worship of the Imperial house." And now at the present time, after all the vicissitudes of her history and the introduction of alien faiths, Shinto is the embodiment of the spirit of patriotism and of loyalty to the reigning house of Japan. Shinto expresses the confidence of the Japanese people "that there is a something more than their present strength and wisdom which directs and aids and on which they may rely."

III

No one can conjecture what would have become of Japan and her religion had she been left to herself. In the sixth century of our era, and even before, influences from the mainland of Asia made themselves felt and in a century or two Japan had entered the stream of Eastern Asiatic civilization. There came from China literature and letters, silkworms and horses, architecture and the crafts, and among many other things a new religion and a new morality—that is, Buddhism and Confucianism. Buddhism became the prevailing religion of Japan and Confucianism the ethical code.

The conquest of Japan by Buddhism was not without opposition. The final victory was not won until a Japanese Buddhist monk, named Kobo Daishi, opened the way to an understanding between Buddhism and Shinto. By a stroke of genius, shall we say, this astute monk proclaimed that the old Kami of Japan were nothing more nor less than incarnations or manifestations of Buddhist deities. By this ruse Shinto sank to a place of inferiority and might have disappeared, had it not been for the political motive which made it stand for reverence and veneration of the imperial house.

From that day to this, Buddhism has remained the religion of the masses of the Japanese people, and for a thousand years it continued the religion of the upper classes as well. The question must arise, What contribution did Buddhism make that it should thus stand first as the religion of these

people? Shinto was simple and bare; Buddhism most complex and gorgeous. Shinto shrines were plain unadorned buildings with no idols and with the simplest accompaniments of worship. Buddhism stimulated art, provided an elaborate ritual and showy paraphernalia for worship. One of the beauties of Japan today is the sight of Buddhist temples tucked away amid the trees in the solemn stillness of some secluded valley. All this was unknown before. A priesthood, in so far as Buddhism can be said to have a priesthood, was everywhere evident. Many splendid divinities were introduced to the people. The other world was opened up before the wondering gaze of the simple natives. For the first time a paradise was promised and a real salvation preached. The most splendid of all the divinities was the merciful Amida, who presides over his paradise beyond the distant western mountains, there to receive all worthy ones to bliss and immortality.

The writer can remember the visits he paid as a boy to the great Buddhist temple at Asakusa, in the city of Tokyo. The whole scene is a strange mixture of solemn worship and pleasure seeking. Shops with toys and candies and all kinds of souvenirs, places for fun and amusement, reminding one a little of Coney Island, vie with the desire for worship to draw thousands to this most popular resort. The temple itself is very unattractive and dirty within, yet here are persons throwing their cash into the enormous coffer, and with bent knees offering their petitions to Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy. "Perhaps no deity plays a bigger role in popular Buddhism, and the famous Asakusa Kwannon temple in Tokyo is the most frequented spot in all Japan, though it must be admitted that in recent years the crowds are drawn, perhaps, more by the 'movies' which flank two sides of the temple." Under the same roof, but open to access by the people, is the famous image of Binzuru, the god of Healing, which has been rubbed by poor afflicted people so long that it has lost all human features and is a shiny mass of wood. According to our ideas, this image must be a

spreader of disease far more than a healer, but the belief of the ignorant people is so great that the Tokyo Board of Health has not dared to forbid the touching of the idol in worship. This is a picture of popular Buddhism today and as it has been for centuries.

IV

Buddhism gave Japan a religion, but it did little in providing the people with an ethical code. Its rules were for the most part for the monks. Here was the opening for Confucianism. But again the unique stamp of Japan must be put on this exotic before it can be called Japanese. And nowhere is the Japanese sign-manual more deeply impressed. Confucius based his whole system on the family and made the first relation that of parent and child. Such a thing could never be allowed in Japan. The state must precede the family in devotion. The first relation is that between ruler and people. Loyalty, not filial piety, is the first virtue. Reverence for parents follows as an undisputed second, but it has lost its place of preeminence. Then again, in China peace is the condition most desired, and in society the most honored member is the scholar-sage. Not so in Japan. The most important concern is to maintain the ascendency of the ruling house—this must be accomplished at all costs. The soldier has always been the first man in the Japanese social scale. But strange to say, the soldier in Japan was also the scholar. The martial and the scholarly were united in one person, thus making a unique and fascinating individual. Confucianism was scarcely Confucianism, when it became acclimated in Japan.

After a thousand years, Buddhism ceased to be the power it once was among the higher classes. What religion they had seems to have been a refined and elevated Confucianism, a conception that there was a power—indefinable and impersonal to be sure, but real—in the universe, a power which mysteriously included everything in its benevolent embrace. Practically this could amount to little more than a quietism, a

stoic acceptance of whatever came as inevitable, a contemplative attitude of acquiescence in all that happened as decreed by high heaven. On the positive side, loyalty to one's feudal lord and defending his honor was sufficient to call out all the desire for activity in the life of an ordinary man.

V

For a second time in her history, Japan began about a half century ago to feel the influence of an alien civilization. This time it was the influence of the Western world. Her response has been wonderful. Profound changes are taking place in the religions.

Officially Shinto has declared itself not to be a religion, though practically the old native divinities are worshiped in the old way, particularly in the out-of-the-way places. It exists for most people as the cult of patriotism and as such its influence is very powerful. Many Japanese, particularly members of the military caste, look upon this semi-religious patriotism as about all the religion Japan needs. This extreme attitude is responsible for the question which is a vital one in Japan today, Can a man be a Christian and a Japanese patriot at the same time? Both answers, affirmative and negative, are still given, many ardent patriots refusing to be convinced of their loyalty by the bravery displayed in two wars by Japanese Christians.

The coming of a new day has made Buddhism attempt to clean house and adapt itself to Western ways. A number of leaders now interpret Buddhism in accordance with Western philosophy and even Christian ideas. It would be hard to recognize as old-time Buddhism, but we must expect more of this same thing as a religion seeks to accommodate itself to the pulse beats of the new life which surrounds it. With the coming of Western education the old morality based on old beliefs begins to lose its hold. This presents one of the most serious situations ever faced by a nation. Recently a census was taken of the 5,000 students in the Imperial University at Tokyo. 450 were willing to put themselves down

as Buddhists or Shintoists, 1,550 registered themselves as atheists, and 3,000 as agnostics. The old religions have lost the allegiance of the rising generation. The result is confusion, uncertainty, and anxiety, morally and religiously. Moral lapses are so frequent as to become the concern of the government; suicides are increasing rapidly; Japan is a nation like a ship at sea, not knowing its bearings and without a rudder. Desperate attempts are being made to inculcate moral principles, but with little effect. No nation in the world is in a more dangerous situation concerning the deeper things of life than Japan.

Is there any need for Christianity? Listen to the words of President Harada of the Doshisha University, the leading Christian institution of Japan, whose declaration is that in a sense not true of the old faiths Christianity has power to satisfy the deepest needs of the heart. It does this by presenting God as a Father, by exhibiting the personality of Jesus, by presenting a positive view of life, by giving a comparatively satisfactory world-view, and by producing examples of a transformed life. In all these respects the religions of Japan have failed. The uncertainty of the present time was expressed in a cable from the volunteers in Japan to the Student Volunteer Convention, meeting at Nashville in 1906, "Japan is leading the Orient—whither?"

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *Religion and the State*

What was the connection between religion and the state in the Old Testament? What was the attitude of the New Testament toward the Roman Empire? What connection should there be between religion and the state now? How can patriotism be saved from narrowness and intolerance?

II. *The Imperial House and Religion*

Why do the Japanese hold the Imperial House in such high honor? What connection does this attitude have

with religion? In what way is Japanese patriotism different from ours? Is there any fundamental incompatibility between patriotism and internationalism?

III. *Buddhism in Japan*

What difference between the Buddhism of Japan and that of Gautama Buddha? What did Buddhism do for Japan? What distinctive points in Japanese Buddhism? What is the hope of the future?

(The best volume of reference on the religions of Japan is "The Development of Religion in Japan," by George W. Knox.)

CHAPTER VIII

WE HAVE ABRAHAM TO OUR FATHER

In the readings this week we are to study the Jew in the light of the Bible. This means that we are to look at him through the eyes of the Old Testament and through the eyes of the New Testament as well, for these men who gave us the New Testament were followers of Jesus Christ, the most illustrious of the sons of Abraham.

Daily Readings

First Day:

> Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.—Gen. 12: 1-3.

Note two things, that a promise is given to Abraham which affects not only him but his descendants, and that the purpose of this call is very far-reaching. How can we today justify God's choice of a particular people? Can it be merely to make them His favorites? What was the ultimate purpose of God in this selection, as given by the writer in verse 3? It is well to keep this purpose in mind in all our thought of the Jewish people.

Second Day: The long history of the Hebrew people is, we may say, the history of God's difficult task of training a

people to fulfil its purpose among the nations. The highest mark of God's favor in the past was the wonderful deliverance out of Egypt.

> When Israel went forth out of Egypt,
> The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
> Judah became his sanctuary,
> Israel his dominion.
> The sea saw it, and fled;
> The Jordan was driven back.
> The mountains skipped like rams,
> The little hills like lambs.—Psalm 114: 1-4.

With all its beauty, is there not a danger in this attitude of narrowness and exclusiveness? Does not this danger exist quite as really today in the life of any nation which is self-centered, and gives little thought to the contribution it may make unselfishly to the life of the world?

THIRD DAY: God's plan for this people became evident to a small group—He did have an aim and they had caught it.

> And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off.—Micah 4: 2-3.

Jerusalem is of course the center still, but the overflow of its religious life will touch even "strong nations afar off."

God's purpose in addition was to build up a people from whom might come a great Deliverer, a Saviour of the whole world. Was any nation ever more highly favored?

FOURTH DAY: The crisis of the history of the Hebrews was the awful experience of the Babylonian captivity. The

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nation as a nation was destroyed, and so far as God's purposes were concerned only a "Remnant" was left.

> And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again lean upon him that smote them, but shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people, Israel, be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall return: a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.—Isa. 10: 20-22.

In the very midst of the captivity a prophet arose who has been called the "Evangelist of the Exile." He caught the significance of Israel's call as few others did, and we have the marvellous Servant passages in the latter part of the book of Isaiah.

> Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. . . . He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.—Isa. 42: 1, 4.
>
> Yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.—Isa. 49: 6.

FIFTH DAY: Jesus came of the Jewish race. He came declaring that the Kingdom of God was at hand, that, despite their blindness and hardness of heart in the past, the chosen people might receive Him and thus meet God's expectations for them.

But this was not to be. He was rejected by His own people, through the hatred of whose leaders He was finally crucified.

We have but a hint or two of the anguish of this experience to Jesus.

> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.—Luke 13:34, 35.

Like a desolate house no longer inhabited, Israel was in a sense abandoned—God no longer needed this race to carry out His purposes.

Sixth Day: Paul had several experiences of rejection by the Jews when he attempted to preach Christ to his fellow Jews as the fulfilment of prophecy.

> And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,
>
> I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
> That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.—Acts 13:44-47.

But to the very end Paul longed and labored that his people might be saved and might join the company of believers in Jesus Christ.

> Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.—Rom. 10:1.

SEVENTH DAY: Paul makes it very clear that membership in the Jewish race was of no advantage to a man. He even interprets circumcision, the distinctive outward mark of the Jew, spiritually.

> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.—Rom. 2:28, 29.

There is then no longer any middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile. All stand on the same footing before God. Have we ever imagined it possible for the Jews to come to Christ? But why not?

STUDY FOR THE WEEK

I

"The Jew, Sir," said his minister to Frederick the Great when asked to give in a single word a proof of the truth of the Bible. Has any race been through what the Jews have and still survived with undiminished vigor? For centuries, yes, ever since the days of the opposition of the Roman Empire to the despised Jew, this race has been banned and persecuted. Shut up in the Ghetto in the cities of Europe, they lived a life apart, and only in comparatively modern times have they been allowed to participate in the life of the nations. Yet they have persisted and by sheer force of ability and pertinacity they have made a valuable contribution to the life of the peoples among whom they have lived. They have proved themselves skilful money makers and this has given them power and influence.

In the realms of music and philosophy they have made a name for themselves. Mendelssohn in the former and Spinoza in the latter are names to conjure with. More recently have they distinguished themselves in political life. While Disraeli was Prime Minister in England, members

of the same race occupied similar positions in three other European countries. While it would thus be possible to recount great names in many fields, the chief interest to us lies in the race itself and in the religion which they profess. Scattered over the world the Jews number about 11,500,000. The "ubiquitous Jew" is found in nearly every land where trade holds out its lure, even though in some of these places he forms but a very small colony. But he is always the same Jew, readily distinguished from the alien population among whom he has taken up his residence.

II

He is distinct in race and in religion. Intermarriage with other people is known, of course, as it was in biblical days, but is frowned upon. Ostracism usually follows such a marriage. It is difficult for an outsider to realize how tenaciously purity of blood is insisted upon as a *sine qua non* in any Jewish community. The Jews come into relation with others in business, in education, and in political life, but all their social life is within their own brotherhood.

All who are Jews racially are counted by outsiders as Jews religiously, with little consideration of the great differences between individuals and different communities. The differences which exist are those of greater or lesser adherence to the customary teachings and practices of the community, but even an extreme variation is not sufficient to cause a severance of relations. They come and go as Jews and are recognized as such by their own people and by others. How many there are who seem to care little for the religious observances of their religion! They are proud of their race and yet take no share in the religious life. For the sake of avoiding criticism and as a matter of outward conformity, they attend the synagogue occasionally and participate in a perfunctory way in the most important feasts, but they have no heart in what they do. They are engrossed in business and have no time for such things.

One of the most serious aspects of the whole situation is

that agnosticism and even atheism have made serious inroads into the ranks of those who are students in the great universities. They are lost to Judaism so far as religion is concerned, with little hope of their recovery. The same is true among the young men and women who belong to the ranks of the extreme socialists and anarchists. They become blatant deniers of the sanctities of life and religion. To hear gifted young Jewish orators haranguing crowds on the foolishness of believing in a personal God or on free-love is to make one shudder with apprehension. Go to any thoughtful Jewish Rabbi and he will be found to be in genuine distress. With the loss of the hold their religion has on these young men, there is inevitable moral slackness. Even those who are in middle life in this country can remember the day when the Jew was pointed to as the man seldom if ever seen in a criminal court as the defendant. He was singularly free from crime and the more flagrant forms of immorality. Now a very different situation faces the investigator. It has even been said that the most striking fact in the criminal records of some of our cities is the growth of crime among Jews—a most remarkable testimony to the close connection between moral deterioration and religious decay.

The other side of the shield is full of encouragement. No class in our country is showing more interest in social and moral reform in all its branches than these keen Jewish students. Leaders in charity organizations and beneficence, advocates of child labor legislation and of prison and other reforms, the Jews must be looked upon as an invaluable element in our civilization. They are one with us politically and commercially and in all movements of progress and improvement.

III

And now, what about his religion? The first distinctive religious fact we observe is that the Jew keeps the Sabbath, going to service on Friday night and Saturday morning. Through all the centuries from the time of Moses he has not

deviated from the practice, but has remembered the Sabbath to keep it holy. Through the portals of the Sabbath, then, we may enter the house of Judaism and find what kind of a religion it is.

One of the most important discoveries we shall make is that the Jew has received a priceless legacy from the past in the Old Testament. How much of the past to which the Jew looks back is identical with that of the Christian! But there is one very significant and striking difference. The Jew is directly descended from the race whose story is the center of interest throughout the volume. They are proud to say, as their ancestors said in the days of Jesus, "We have Abraham to our Father." Their Temple is gone, to be sure, sacrifices are abolished, nationality is extinct, they are scattered among all the nations; yet despite all this the old covenant relation between God and this people is very precious and real to them. They are still conscious of a mission, they are still the chosen of the Lord.

Without the Temple and without the priestly and sacrificial system, they were driven in upon themselves and their own spiritual resources. Along with this deepening of spirituality has come the regulation of life and conduct, even down to the minutest details. The basis of it all was the law of Moses, in addition to which various codes have been formulated. The one under which the great bulk of the Jews still live is that of Joseph Caro, called the "Table Prepared," which is an arrangement of the whole traditional law. The Law has always been looked upon as "the expression of the will of God." But in it lurked a danger which the Jews have not escaped, that of placing such emphasis upon the strict keeping of the law that all else is considered of secondary importance. Today law is looked upon by many of the progressives as a curtailment of personal liberty. A new spirit is abroad, the effect of which no one can prognosticate. Indeed it is stated thus, "The chief modern problem in Jewish life is just this: to what extent, and in what manner, can Judaism still place itself under the reign of Law?"

IV

While in conduct a Jew was bound by the exact requirements of the written Law, in belief he was free. The essential elements of the Jewish religion have never been stated authoritatively. No one dared step in to compel the local synagogue to do anything counter to its own judgment. To put this thought in the words of a Jewish writer, "Since the time of Moses Mendelssohn (1728-1786), the chief Jewish dogma has been that Judaism has no dogmas."

This does not mean that no scholars have drawn up sets of beliefs, nor that many Jews have not recognized them as true. On the contrary, this has been done many times. In 1896 the American Jews prepared what they called the "Proselyte Confession," as a statement of beliefs for the benefit of outsiders and seekers, who desired to know what Judaism stood for today. It consists of five brief statements, as follows: (1) God the Holy One; (2) Man His Image; (3) Immortality of the Soul; (4) Retribution; (5) Israel's Mission.

In the very forefront of all statements of their belief is monotheism. There is but one God and He only is Lord of heaven and earth. This is the most important feature of the heritage from the past, and it is heralded with great clarity wherever the Jew is to be found.

An important feature of Judaism has always been its feasts. The interest has persisted, Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles being still celebrated, and there are many others. But these feasts are losing or have lost their primary significance and are being interpreted "ideally and symbolically." What will happen more and more is their modification and adaptation, so that they may continue to be a pleasing and significant feature of the religious life of the community.

V

One of the difficulties in making any statement about the Jewish religion, however brief, is caused by the divisions

among the Jews themselves. Even among those who call themselves orthodox there are extremists, like those, for example, in Poland, who attempt to preserve intact all that Judaism was in the early period. They look upon their Bible and the Talmud as alike inspired and authoritative, and have changed little in their expectation of a Messiah who is to come and fulfil literally all the prophecies of the Old Testament. From this extreme, gradations lead down through others still called orthodox until a hazy line is crossed and the confines of the Reform or Liberal Jews are reached. As they have absorbed modern culture and have come into contact with the currents of modern thought, they find it difficult to hold the old views without modification.

Most Jews still possess the Messianic hope. In the words of one of their leaders, "The Messianic hope promises the establishment, by the Jews, of a world power in Palestine to which all the nations of the earth will pay homage." The recent fall of Jerusalem has vivified this expectation. On the other hand, "The Messianic idea now means to many Jews a belief in human development and progress, with the Jews filling the role of the Messianic people, but only as *primus inter pares.* It is an expression of a genuine optimism." In orthodox circles the principle may be said to be, "Judaism for the Jew," but in contrast "modern reformed Judaism is a universal Judaism." The national aspects are waning and the bold step is being taken of asserting that their religion is for all men. They are steering their bark out into the full current of modern religious life.

What the outcome will be, who can say? The old orthodox Jews are distinct and separate, both in belief and as a community, from all other religious bodies. The modern liberal Jews lose their distinctiveness in belief and practice and can scarcely be distinguished from the rationalistic theist to be found so frequently these days. Their belief is very tenuous indeed, scarcely sufficient to hold believers together were it not for other considerations. And other conditions do exist. They are Jews in race, and that means much even

among the most liberal. They must hold together as a distinct community. They have a mission to perform. Put in the words of the London Jewish Religious Union, "Till the main religious and moral principles of Judaism have been accepted by the world at large, the maintenance by the Jews of a separate corporate existence is a religious duty incumbent upon them. They are the witnesses of God, and they must adhere to their religion, showing forth its truth and excellence to all mankind."

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *The Jewish People in the Bible*

For what purpose were the Jewish people called to be a chosen people? In what way were other peoples affected by God's call of this one race? What may we expect of this race in the future religiously?

II. *Characteristics of the Race*

Note their importance in the life of the world today. What is their present religious condition? What are the dangers to be found at the present day?

III. *Religious and Moral Situation*

What is the unity of the Jewish race today? What religious authority do they recognize? What is the basis of their moral life? What is their expectation in the future? What do they consider is their mission as a people?

(A small book entitled "Judaism," by Israel Abrahams, will be found helpful in studying this chapter.)

CHAPTER IX

A PROPHET WHO MISSED THE WAY

Mohammed is always thought of as a prophet. His own claim was that he was the last, the climactic figure, of a succession of prophets. Of the prophets six are eminent above all others: Adam, the Chosen of God; Noah, the Preacher of God; Abraham, the Friend of God; Moses, the Converser with God; Jesus, the Spirit of God; Mohammed, the Messenger of God. With the doctrine of prophets so prominent in his teaching, we may profitably take up the same subject from the standpoint of the Bible.

Daily Readings

First Day: Let us seek to discover the kind of a man a prophet must be. He is to deliver a message, a message which is not his own, and much depends on his personal character and outlook. Recall the account of the call of the prophet Isaiah, which closes with these words:

> And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.—Isa. 6:8.

Early in his career Isaiah recognized that character, inner purity expressing itself through his lips, was essential in a messenger of God.

Second Day: Isaiah's ministry was most varied. He appears in the role of a statesman giving advice to kings. Read the account of the word he sent to King Hezekiah after the defiant speech delivered to Jerusalem by the Assyrian officer whose master was invading the country. When the people

in Jerusalem were being persuaded to surrender to the Assyrians, Isaiah plays the part of the statesman.

> And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return unto his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.—Isa. 37:6-7.

Hezekiah in his alarm would doubtless have paid respect to the summons to open the gates of the city. Isaiah with rare wisdom sees that another course is advisable. God has endowed at times unselfish men like Isaiah with the ability to see far more clearly than their fellows. Our picture of a prophet now includes purity of heart, unselfish devotion to his own city, the gift of the seer, and above all, the consciousness of responsibility to God for his conduct.

THIRD DAY: Jeremiah, the suffering prophet of the last days of the Israelitish nation, stands out as one of the greatest in the prophetic line. His call differs greatly from that of Isaiah, and it has its unique lessons for us.

> Now the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child. But Jehovah said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah. Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth: see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over

> the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.—Jer. 1: 4-10.

Not so much the consciousness of sin as the fear of being too weak to deliver God's message fills Jeremiah with apprehension. How are his fears allayed? Jeremiah was a prophet because the hand of God was laid heavily on him.

> And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain.—Jer. 20: 9.

This passage brings out forcibly what is perhaps the chief function of a prophet, to be one who speaks out for God, delivers His message. He is then primarily a preacher, a preacher of righteousness, a herald of doom, or a harbinger of good tidings.

FOURTH DAY: Not only were there true prophets in Israel, in a number of places a class of men is mentioned called "false prophets," professionals, whose only right to the title is their own claim.

> Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith Jehovah, that steal my words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith Jehovah, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy lying dreams, saith Jehovah, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their vain boasting: yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; neither do they profit this people at all, saith Jehovah. —Jer. 23: 30-32.

A prophet must be judged by the fruits of his ministry, nobility of character, wisdom in utterance, and unselfish devotion to the Kingdom of God.

FIFTH DAY: The sincerity of a man's profession is tested by persecution. A noble example of constancy is found in the experience of Jeremiah, who would not say smooth words to tickle the ears of a perverse people. Read the story of his imprisonment.

> And the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe; for they had made that the prison. When Jeremiah was come into the dungeon-house, and into the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days; then Zedekiah the king sent, and fetched him: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from Jehovah? And Jeremiah said, There is. He said also, Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, Wherein have I sinned against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? Where now are your prophets that prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?—Jer. 37: 15-19.

How much a man can endure when he knows he is right!

SIXTH DAY: The last of the line of Old Testament prophets is John the Baptist. Read Jesus' appraisal of this gaunt son of the desert, who had suddenly appeared calling on men to repent:

> And as these went their way, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. But wherefore went ye out? to see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written,

> Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
> Who shall prepare thy way before thee.
> Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.—Matt. 11:7-11.

"Yea, and much more than a prophet"—a man living the simple life not as a fad, but because the call of God had driven him out into the desert. He was the last of that glorious band of prophets who for a thousand years and more had heard God's call, had found the trail, and had not missed the way.

SEVENTH DAY: Technically speaking, the order of prophets came to an end with the appearance of Jesus. But there are references to men in the Apostolic Church called "prophets." Read Paul's estimate of the work of such men in the Christian Church.

> Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth; but in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation. He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.—I Cor. 14:1-5.

He places prophesying above the mysterious "gift of tongues." This means that the "gift" of speaking out plainly God's message so that men can understand it is to be prized highly. We speak today of Christian ministers as bearing the mantle of the prophets, in so far as they faithfully declare the message God has planted in their souls. Are they not

prophets also who, with broad vision and depth of life, direct the attention of men and women to the judgments of God as they see them writ large in the events of the day?

Study for the Week

I

La ilah illa' llah; Mohammed resoul Allah. This simple short creed of the Mohammedan world, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah," resounds from ten thousand minarets five times each day. From the day when Mohammed appointed a crier, the sound of the human voice has been the summons to private devotion and to public worship in the mosque. Two hundred millions of Mohammedans, whether within sound of the voice of the Muezzin, as he is called, or out in the desert sands, lay down their burdens five times each day and, reverently facing Mecca, prostrate themselves to the ground, repeat the creed, and make known their requests to Allah.

Two hundred millions of them, yes and it may be more, as some believe. They are found in China, in the vast tablelands of Central Asia, in the Dutch East Indies, where they are the dominant religious force, and as far to the east as the Sulu archipelago of our own Philippines. From India, west through the entire distance to the Atlantic coast of Africa, the Mohammedan has made a clean sweep. Afghanistan, Persia, Arabia—the "Cradle of Islam"—the Turkish Empire, Egypt, and all the states as far as the extreme northwest corner of Africa, are almost solidly Moslem. The exceptions are the remnants of so-called Oriental Christian churches, like the Armenian Church in Turkey and the Coptic Church in Egypt. South of these north African states stretches the mighty Sahara, whose nomadic peoples are all followers of the Prophet. And south of the Sahara is the populous Sudan, where the tribes not now Mohammedan are falling rapidly an easy prey to the emissaries of Islam. Here and in the East Indies Mohammedanism is advancing most

rapidly, making converts and capturing tribe after tribe. The advance is so swift that, up to the present time, Christianity has not been able to thwart the progress. In Africa especially the question must be asked, Is the continent to be Mohammedan or Christian? Paganism cannot hold its own before any higher faith, so the question has narrowed itself down to this simple alternative, Mohammed or Christ. What is the significance of this alternative?

II

The chief factor in Mohammedanism is Mohammed. To believe in him is as necessary as to believe in Allah. So we must try to understand Mohammed if we would know his religion. Islam is not a "bolt out of the blue"; it was not born full-fledged out of the brain of Mohammed, as his followers still fondly believe. The investigations of European scholars enable us to fill in many details concerning the Arabs before Mohammed's time. One feature in the picture is altogether favorable to Mohammed. He is shown to have been a true reformer. He made war against the prevailing infanticide, particularly of the girl babies; he abolished the blood-feud between tribes by proclaiming a new brotherhood; he was relentless in his opposition to polytheism and the use of idols, and he succeeded in establishing the worship of one God, Allah, in the land.

Allah was a well-known God in Arabia before Mohammed's time. What Mohammed did was to raise him to the position of sole God of the universe, denying the existence of all others. Mecca was already a "Mecca" when Mohammed was born. To this city as a religious center the tribes flocked at certain seasons and performed their rites. Mohammed seized upon these practices, gave them a new interpretation by connecting them with the name of Abraham, and made pilgrimage to Mecca and the exact performance of a striking ritual an essential part of the faith. Not only were these features taken over from the existing heathenism; there were a few

men in Arabia who, it would seem, had lost faith in the old paganism and were longing for a purer faith. Mohammed seems to have been in touch with these men. Then there were scattered over the land communities of Jews and of Christians, from whom, particularly the Jews, Mohammed picked up many things which he incorporated in his religion.

III

Mohammed was born in Mecca in the year 570, and died in Medina in 632 A. D. He came of a well-known and influential family, but, being left an orphan at an early age, was brought up first by his grandfather, and then by his uncle Abu Talib. These experiences left a deep impression upon a very impressionable young boy. To the very end of his life he was most kind to the widow and the orphan. Not much is known of his boyhood and young manhood. It is probable that he was subject to attacks of the nature of epileptic seizures. Throughout his whole life Mohammed gives indications of being not quite normal. As one writer put it, he is a "pathological case." He was called by his companions *Al Amin*, the Trusty or Faithful. Why or when we do not know, but the giving of the name alone would indicate that he was regarded favorably by his fellows.

When he was about twenty-five he was recommended to his kinswoman Khadijah, a well-to-do widow, as one to be trusted to conduct her affairs upon one of the caravan journeys which were the source of Mecca's commercial prosperity. He accepted the mission, performed it successfully, and so pleased his employer that she offered him her hand in marriage. Though she was fifteen years his senior, Mohammed accepted her offer and they were married. For twenty-five years they lived happily together, Khadijah being his only wife. Until the time of his marriage Mohammed had been of necessity a man of affairs. The old epithet, "The Camel Driver of Mecca," may be more or less truly descriptive of him. But now, married to a woman of means, he had leisure.

Dreamer that he was, he now had ample opportunity to indulge his tastes. This fact made possible the rise of the new religion.

IV

At some time about the year 610, while Mohammed and his family were seeking to escape the torrid and enervating heat of Mecca on the heights of Mt. Hira, not far away, Mohammed received what is known as the first revelation. To us it sounds curious enough. According to tradition this is the word which came to him, as recorded in the 96th Sura or chapter of the Koran.

"Recite thou, in the name of thy Lord who created;—
Created man from Clots of Blood:—
Recite thou! For thy Lord is the most Beneficent,
Who hath taught the use of the pen;—
Hath taught Man that which he knoweth not."

He is told to proclaim something, in the name of the great God, one of whose recent benefactions was that he had taught the Arabs reading and writing. Very indefinite and very inconsequential, we say. We must judge, however, by the effect on Mohammed. He was greatly agitated, his whole being was profoundly moved, he could never be the same man again. Is this all that was to be revealed? That was the question Mohammed asked over and over again. His mental condition became such that he is said to have attempted to take his own life, and was only prevented from doing so by his good wife, Khadijah. She was his stay during this period when no further revelation came. She assured him that God had in reality spoken to him, and that the voice would come again.

And sure enough another message came. Two years are said by many to have passed before the silence was broken. Then came the words recorded at the opening of the 74th Sura.

"O thou, enwrapped in thy mantle!
Arise and warn!
Thy Lord—magnify Him!
Thy raiment—purify it!
The abomination—flee it!
And bestow not favors that thou mayest receive again with increase;
And for thy Lord wait thou patiently.
For when there shall be a trump on the trumpet,
That shall be a distressful day,
A day, to the Infidels, devoid of ease."

From these words Mohammed took it that he was now commissioned to "arise and warn." And the main contents of the message are given, too—he is to magnify Allah his Lord; he is not to consider what men may say or do; and he is to herald "the day," the "distressful" day of judgment, which is surely coming. This describes quite faithfully the mission of Mohammed during the period he spent in Mecca. He was a "Warner," the sounds of the Day of Judgment are always ringing in his ears. The Almighty Allah is seated on his throne of power, jealous of his prerogatives, and demanding utter submission and implicit obedience. Hence the name of the religion, *Islam,* which means "to submit"; hence the designation of the individual Mohammedan, *Moslem,* "one who submits." It is, according to the new prophet, a religion of submission to Allah; from this center all Mohammed's preaching radiates.

V

Now for ten or twelve years Mohammed preached his doctrine to all who would listen. As the years passed a small group of influential men gathered around him, men who in the years to come were to play an important role in the history of the religion, but for the most part the Moslems were from the poor and the slave class. They were so seriously persecuted that twice a group found it advisable to go to

Abyssinia to find refuge. Mohammed himself received the protection of his uncle, Abu Talib, and thus escaped. So serious was the opposition of the Meccans that it became more evident as the years passed that his mission had no chance of success in his own city.

From the time the second revelation came Mohammed seems never to have faltered in his belief that he was God's messenger. Not only in the days of success in Medina, but during the period of persecution and opposition in Mecca, he was ever the same, the uncompromising herald of God's judgment and of his own high office as God's messenger. There is much evidence on which to rest an argument for Mohammed's sincerity during these years in Mecca. His was the spirit of the reformer, of the genuine preacher of righteousness and the wrath of God on all disobedience. After the long period of which we have spoken when no revelation was granted, a complete change takes place. There is a steady flow of revelations until the end of his life. When he had died, these fragments were collected and brought together into a book which we know as the Koran. The meaning of the word is "what is recited," the participle of the very first word which came to him at the first revelation. So the Koran is simply the collection of these inspired utterances of Mohammed. In the Meccan days the utterances were short and energetic outbursts of poetic fire. He is the "Poet-warner," and he preaches his message with vigor. He believed that as occasion demanded God sent him the appropriate message by the hand of the Angel Gabriel.

About the year 620 Mohammed suffered the loss of two friends. One was his protector, Abu Talib, and the other was his wife, Khadijah. There was little now to hold him in Mecca, and he began to seek a suitable center from which he might preach his religion with more hope of success. Two years passed, before the step was taken. In the memorable year 622, the year *one* in the Mohammedan calendar, occurred the Hegira, or "Flight." Mohammed left Mecca and secretly made his way to Medina, a city about 250 miles due

north. The people of Medina, as well as his own followers who had preceded him, received him cordially. Here Mohammed settled down and lived the remainder of his life.

VI

The Hegira marks an era. Mohammed is no longer a mere preacher of righteousness, a warner; he is now a ruler, an administrator with civic problems on his hands and a religious community to build up and make a force in Arabia. The community was frequently almost in destitution in the early days, so Mohammed would send out and even accompany foraging expeditions, whose purpose was to waylay caravans and secure booty. Our immediate reaction is that this is sorry business for one who claims to be a prophet of God. The hand of necessity is laid on him, one says, but still there is incongruity here.

Mohammed's eager desire from the beginning was to be recognized in his own city. Stout resistance was offered for some years, but as time passed Mohammed's prestige rose so steadily that the only thing for the Meccans to do was to open the gates of the city and let him in. Mohammed entered Mecca in triumph. It was a victory without bloodshed or loss. Mohammed had become the first man of Arabia.

At first Mohammed sought an alliance of friendship with the Jews, but it was not long before such a relationship was found impossible. Of three leading Jewish tribes in the vicinity of Medina, two were cruelly banished from the country and the last had a more tragic end. The men were beheaded in cold blood in the center of Medina, and the women and children were sold into slavery. Again it is said that these severe measures were justified by the unfriendliness and the treachery of the Jews. But when it is remembered that Mohammed was posing all this time as a God-inspired prophet of righteousness, the case grows desperate.

If his treatment of the Jews deserves such condemnation,

what of his relation with women? During the lifetime of Khadijah, she was his one wife and he seemed satisfied and happy. But as soon as she was taken away from him, he married one woman after another until in the end he had about a dozen. As much as we recoil from such gross polygamy, it was not uncommon in Arabia, and his Arab followers might not have given the matter a second thought. He found slavery, polygamy, and divorce in the land when he came, and never thought of doubting their right to continue. He even mitigated the condition of slaves and gave women certain legal rights they had never possessed before.

But this is not the whole story. We have many evidences, both in the traditions and in the Koran, that Mohammed transgressed even the ideals and customs of that lax age, and was able to save his face and hold the admiration of his followers by recourse to the dreadful expedient of a special revelation from God. His marriage to the wife of his adopted son Zeid, who divorced her in order that she might become the wife of Mohammed, was so gross an infringement of the proprieties in the estimation of the Arabs that the justifying revelations in the Koran are very careful to make his act the result of a direct command of God. Only considerations of space and the desire to draw the veil as soon as possible prevent a fuller exposé of Mohammed in this sad and unhappy role.

VII

Such was Arabia's prophet, such the man now pointed to as a paragon of excellence, such the example now held up as worthy of admiration and imitation. Two events, crucial in the character of Mohammed, help to explain the strange paradox of his character. One was the death of his wife Khadijah. His life while she lived was exemplary, as far as we know; the debasement of polygamy did not touch him during these years. As soon as her restraining influence was gone he began his downward course. The other great event was Mohammed's assumption of the powers of a worldly potentate.

He became autocratic and vindictive. His character could not stand such an increase of authority. He fell from the high estate of a prophet to the position of an unscrupulous despot, seeking by every means in his power to enhance his own authority and suppress all rivals. As much as we feel the strange anomaly of the situation, we are compelled by the facts to hold that the Medina period is vastly different from the earlier Meccan period. It is not the same Mohammed. The prophet started out on the right trail, but he had missed his way. There is a possible tragedy in being a genius, a tragedy in being able to cast one's spell over millions of human beings for so many generations, when the character of the genius falls so far below the high standard which men should set for their leaders.

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *The Prophet in the Bible*

What was the business of the prophet in Old Testament religion? What the marks of a true prophet? How did he differ from the priest? What need is there for men of the prophetic spirit in our modern life?

II. *The Prophet in Islam*

Note well the important place held by Mohammed in his religion. What was the secret of his influence? Recount the factors which he contributed to make Islam what it was.

III. *The Prophet as a Man*

Contrast the admirable and unlovely traits in the life of Mohammed. Why did not his moral delinquency turn his followers away from him? What about him kept them loyal through all his inconsistencies? What conclusion have you reached relative to his sincerity?

("Muhammad and His Power," by P. DeLacy Johnstone, will serve as a good source for further facts concerning the Prophet.)

CHAPTER X

THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH

The "eternal truth" of the Mohammedan creed is that there is but one God. Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are the three great monotheistic religions of history. It might appear that to say a religion is monotheistic is to say all that is necessary about the God of that religion, but a study of Islam will show that it is altogether inadequate. What kind of a God do we take the one God of the universe to be? This is as necessary as to ask if he is the only God. So now we use the opportunity offered to make a brief study of the kind of a God we have presented to us in the Bible.

Daily Readings

First Day: God is one and there is no other power in the universe to be compared with Him. To arrive at such a conclusion was an achievement. Many centuries passed before the Hebrew prophets were able to lift the people to that high level. Jehovah had long been their God, but He was their own and did not belong to any other people. A curious passage relative to David shows how such a belief works out in practice.

> And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant, If it be Jehovah that hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if it be the children of men, cursed be they before Jehovah; for they have driven me out this day that I should

not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods.—I Sam. 26:17-19.

David's interpretation of Saul's actions is that in driving him out of the land of Israel he was sending him out of Jehovah's jurisdiction and saying, "Go, serve other gods."

Read the closing verses of the story of the cleansing of Naaman the Syrian, when he comes back to offer thanks to Elisha for his recovery.

> And Naaman said, If not, yet, I pray thee, let there be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth; for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto Jehovah.—II Kings 5:17.

"Though Jehovah has revealed Himself to the conscience of Naaman as the only genuine God, yet He can properly be worshiped only on Israelitish soil."

Second Day: When Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, came walking through the streets of Bethel with his warning, "Thus saith Jehovah," a new note was to be heard. The message God had to speak was not for Judah and Israel alone, but for Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Jehovah was God not of Israel alone, but of other nations as well.

> Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah.—Amos 9:7, 8.

Third Day: In the later prophets the thought is worked out with great power and beauty. The Prophet of the Exile returns to the theme time and again.

> Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I established the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass, let them declare. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have I not declared unto thee of old, and showed it? and ye are my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no Rock; I know not any.—Isa. 44: 6-8.

Here is monotheism full-fledged and majestic. There is no God except Jehovah.

And this God is omnipotent, He holds all things in the hollow of His hand.

> Thus saith God Jehovah, he that created the heavens, and stretched them forth; he that spread abroad the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.—Isa. 42: 5.
>
> I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens; and all their host have I commanded.—Isa. 45: 12.

FOURTH DAY: God was not only great and powerful, He had a distinctive character. He is first of all the Holy One of Israel.

> For I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that moveth upon the earth. For I am Jehovah that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.—Lev. 11: 44, 45.
>
> But Jehovah of hosts is exalted in justice, and God the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness.—Isa. 5: 16.

God is just and righteous. He is not capricious, He can always be counted on to be true to Himself.

He is also kind and merciful to the children of men. Read the whole of the 103rd Psalm, of which we quote here a few verses.

> He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
> Nor rewarded us after our iniquities.
> For as the heavens are high above the earth,
> So great is his lovingkindness toward them that fear him.
> As far as the east is from the west,
> So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
> Like as a father pitieth his children,
> So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.
> For he knoweth our frame;
> He remembereth that we are dust.—Psalm 103: 10-14.

FIFTH DAY: The great contribution made by Jesus was to show God as Father. The 103rd Psalm speaks of God as being like a father, but Jesus filled the conception with a meaning never known before.

> Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.—Matt. 5: 43-45.

A new relation of intimacy with God is made possible by Jesus Christ. In a new sense men belong to God's family.

SIXTH DAY: Every feature in the character of God as depicted in the Old Testament is emphasized in the New. He is the one God, Lord of heaven and earth, the one high and lifted-up, who hates sin and loves righteousness, He is all-wise and merciful and gracious. But other aspects are introduced.

The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring.—Acts 17: 24-28.

No chasm separates man from God.

"Closer is he than breathing,
Nearer than hands and feet."

We are made in His image; we live in Him; we are to be like Him as we see Him in Jesus Christ, for God is a Christ-like God.

SEVENTH DAY: The climax of the whole revelation is to be found in the conception of God's love. Repeat to yourself the well-known words of John 3: 16. It was God's love that sent Jesus Christ to men. Also read two of Paul's mighty passages:

But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. 5: 8.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. 8: 37-39.

In Christ God's love is to be seen full and free. As we might expect, we must go to the writings of John for certain characteristic utterances about the deeper things of God which are not to be found elsewhere.

> Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.—I John 4:7-9.

So then, God not only loves, He *is* Love; it is of the very essence of His nature. And we may know that we abide in Him if we possess His Spirit, and can that Spirit be any other than the Spirit of Love?

Study for the Week

I

The faith of the Arabian prophet is alert and aggressive. Its followers believe in its divine origin and in its destiny. There must be something about the religion to influence men in this fashion, and we must try to discover what it is.

Take the case of a pagan tribe in the Sudan in Central Africa—what is the appeal of Islam there? In the very first contact with the Mohammedan trader or teacher, the pagan is conscious of his own inferiority. The Moslem may be haughty and overbearing, but this only heightens the respect in which he is held—such an attitude is an evidence of superior knowledge and ability. Then the Moslem dresses in such a manner as to increase his dignity in the eyes of the simple pagans. He treats with disdain their religious practices, and performs his own religious ceremonies with such regularity, precision, and awesome reverence that the natives cannot fail to be impressed. More than that, the Moslem stranger is not so far removed in customs and culture but that the pagan can understand him. The Moslem will inter-

marry with the natives and thus establish a strong bond between them. He holds out the advantage of belonging to a community scattered over the earth in which all men are brothers. The Moslem lives on a level appreciably higher than the pagan, and it influences him greatly. The fact that Islam tolerates polygamy and divorce is of no consequence, for no other ideal has ever entered the native's mind. He may at times be surprised at the immorality of the stranger, but that is easily counterbalanced by so many other things, that it makes little difference in the final decision. In a short time the village is imitating the Moslem in his worship, and reciting the creed as he does. They have made the transition and are Mohammedans; they have put away their pagan ceremonies and pagan deities, and are worshipers of Allah, and Allah alone.

Can they be counted on to remain loyal Moslems? Usually, even though little intelligence may accompany their worship. Of one thing the Moslem missionary is sure, the second generation will be stanch believers, "dyed in the wool." They have an advantage over their fathers, they know far better the meaning of what they are doing. Now these people are lifted to a level a little higher than the one they had occupied —there can be no doubt of that. The difficulty is that once on the new level they remain stationary. They are deaf to all appeals made by Christian missionaries, whose standard is so much higher. Instead of Islam being a half-way house between paganism and Christianity, it is a barrier between the two and increases the problem of lifting the backward Moslemized pagan peoples tenfold.

II

What is there about the faith itself which furnishes religious satisfaction to its followers? One thing must be emphasized, that there is nothing which calls for privation or sacrifice. Mohammed knew human nature well and accommodated his teaching to the weaknesses as well as to the aspirations of mankind.

The practice of Islam rests on what are called the five Pillars of the Faith. We must know what they are if we would understand what being a Moslem day by day means.

1. The repetition of the creed, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah." This is repeated times without number each day by every Mohammedan. It is a part of the call of the Muezzin as he announces the hours of worship. It is the test of loyalty, and furnishes a significant declaration of a man's conversion to the faith. If he asserts that he believes there is no God but Allah and that Mohammed is his prophet, he thereby proclaims himself a Mohammedan. No questions are asked as to his intentions or sincerity—he *is* a Moslem and a member of the brotherhood.

2. Prayer, at five stated times each day, as well as at any other times when need arises. These five prayers are definitely prescribed and are one of the chief outward marks of the religion. They occur as follows: the first just before sunrise, the second at high noon, the third in what we would call mid-afternoon, the fourth just after sunset, and the fifth soon after night has closed. All in sound of the Muezzin's voice are summoned at the appropriate times; others far out in the desert determine the times for themselves by simple rules which people who carry no timepieces know so well. At each of the five times, a form of worship is carried out, a ceremony fixed with great care by the prophet himself. A prayer rug or mat is spread on the ground and, turning toward Mecca, each worshiper proceeds to bow himself low before Allah and to utter the prescribed prayers. The actual prayer is always preceded by the most careful ablution, with water usually, but with clean desert sand if no water is to be had. The whole ceremony can be learned easily, though it would be difficult to describe it accurately.

Who can say that the constant practice of these daily prayers has not done as much to preserve Islam intact as any other single thing? Moslems not only believe in their reli-

gion, they act it out in prostration and prayer five times each day, without fail and without any deviation. The effect is heightened when all together in the mosque, led by a prayer leader, arranged in long regular rows, go through the ceremony with the precision of a West Point dress parade. Yes, formality and mechanical ritualism to be sure—that is our criticism thousands of miles removed from the actual facts. The impression made on the careful observer is that real awe and reverence characterize the proceeding. At the conclusion of the service the worshipers slip away in solemn hush. Allah is a reality to them—no one can doubt that who has seen them pray.

Closely connected with prayer in Islam is the use made of the Koran. The Moslem now believes that the Koran was handed down to Mohammed as need arose, but that it is really eternal. They assert that it is uncreated and has always existed as a finished product at the right hand of Allah. Can any theory of inspiration be more drastic than this? The Sacred Book is read and recited with great diligence and very frequently. To quote from an article by Theodore Noldeke, "And since the use of the Koran in public worship, in schools, and otherwise is much more extensive than, for example, the reading of the Bible in most Christian countries, it has been truly described as the most widely-read book in existence." How does that statement sound in our ears?

And what is this Koran, this book of Mohammed which dominates the minds of so many human beings? With all we may say of its poetic beauty in the earlier Suras, and of the blazing denunciations of any conception save that of God's absolute unity; despite its rhythmic flow in the original, the book is to us rather dull reading. Carlyle, not without a touch of exaggeration, wrote of it: "I must say, it is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook. . . . Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through." About the length of our New Testament, written in Arabic, the "Language of the Angels," it is not to be desecrated by

translation into profane tongues. Composed with a rhythmic swing, and regarded as the standard of all literary excellence, the Koran binds together the whole Moslem world in language as well as in religion.

3. Almsgiving. Mohammed never ceased to inculcate the duty of succoring the poor, especially the orphan and the widow. In the early days, when in the Moslem world church and state were one, the matter of charity was carefully regulated and was placed in the care of state officials. Now that most Moslems are under the government of Christian powers, almsgiving has become of necessity a matter of the individual conscience, yet faithful Moslems continue the practice of relieving want and suffering as opportunity offers.

4. Fasting, particularly during the month of Ramadan. The regulation is that not a drop of water or a particle of food shall pass the lips of a Mohammedan during the daytime throughout this month. Of course, exception is made for sick people and those who may be in a battle or military campaign. Not a thing must be taken after the time when one can distinguish a white thread from a black by daylight. Such is the regulation and so it is observed. Observed? Yes, in the letter, but surely not in the spirit, by hosts of Moslems. They make this month the greatest month of feasting and revelling in the whole year—fasting all day and feasting all night—so that in Persia medical missionaries assert that they have more cases of indigestion and kindred troubles to deal with in Ramadan than at any other time!

5. Pilgrimage to Mecca, called the Hajj. Once in his lifetime every Mohammedan is supposed to make the pilgrimage to the Holy City, Mecca, and also to Medina, the City of the Prophet. It is not an absolutely binding rule, and many of course do not go; but it is the ambition of everyone to be able some day to make the pilgrimage. He is honored when he comes back and is called a Haji, one who has made the pilgrimage. Mecca and the pilgrimage stand for the unity of Islam. There a Moslem from China, for example, mingles with his fellow-Moslems from the west coast of Africa.

This experience is to him the symbol of the unity of the Brotherhood. It is real to him, has he not seen it with his own eyes?

III

And now let us penetrate a little deeper. We have taken a look at the outward observances of the religion, let us see what a Mohammedan believes. Again we revert to the creed, "There is no God but Allah." Here is the core of the teaching—the doctrine of God fills about nine-tenths of all their Moslem theological systems. And the first thing to say about Allah is that he is the only God, the sole creator and sustainer of the universe. Here is monotheism as clear and as uncompromising as in Judaism or in Christianity. The unity of God makes the religion universal, for there is but one God and he is the God of all. The hope filling the breast of every Mohammedan is that his religion may extend farther and farther until it has become the religion of mankind. Coming as he did six centuries after Jesus Christ, Mohammed is the last of the prophets, the consummation of a religious development in which Jesus played an important though subordinate part.

Allah, this one God of the universe, is almighty. Nothing can withstand his power; he can do what he will. No restraint of any kind is to be thought of. This leads to two practical results. One is the fatalism which dominates the thinking of the Mohammedan world. There can be no question that Mohammed himself held to at least a certain amount of freewill in man, and at the same time to the irresistibility of God's eternal decrees. This is not hard to understand when we remember that he was no theologian and was incapable of forming a system of thought. He simply spoke out what was in his mind at the time, and did not trouble himself about inconsistencies, even if he saw them. But as the Koran advances, determinism becomes more and more evident. This trend became distinctive of Islam and is now well-nigh universal. Man is in the hands of an Al-

mighty Power who can do with him as he wills. Man's part is to submit in humble acceptance of all that comes. Hence Islam became the name of the religion—it is submission to the almighty will of Allah, who determines all things, even down to the most insignificant details. Like a pall the thick cloud of fatalism hangs over the Islamic world, making moral enthusiasm impossible and cutting the nerve of spiritual aspiration.

The other result which flows from the doctrine of God's unlimited power is that Allah's almightiness is capricious. He does what he will, uncontrolled by any other influence. Righteousness and love do not determine the direction Allah's will should take. That would be to limit him, and even though it is an inner limitation, one in his own nature, the Mohammedan will have none of it. What has really happened is that, without realizing it, Islam has transferred a typical, irresponsible Eastern potentate to the heavens, endowed him with irresistible power, and called him God. So high is Allah above all his creation, so unique and unapproachable, that a great chasm separates him even from man, the highest of his creatures. To say that man is created in the image of God is blasphemy to a Moslem. That were to drag God down to man's level, and that is too dreadful to contemplate. Man must be kept entirely separate from God, not a child and an heir of his glory, but only a slave whose duty is unquestioning obedience. Man is not spiritual as God is; he is carnal and carnal must he always remain. Everything in the teaching is made to suit this conception. If he be carnal, man can never hope to share the divine nature. All he has to do is to obey God and as a reward of his obedience will be allowed to enter paradise, a paradise devised to give him the sensuous and sensual gratifications which he desired on earth and which are the only kind he is capable of understanding. Islam is surely a religion of the natural man, unrelieved by any lofty spiritual idealism.

And yet, with these palpable weaknesses, Islam continues to lead men spellbound through their lives. They see none

of these things as defects, and actually turn on Christianity and point the finger of scorn at a doctrine of God which they look upon as far inferior. Like the blazing sun in the desert wastes of Arabia, so Allah, the divine Sun in the heavens, blinds men to all else. He is all powerful; they care little about other things, provided he is allowed to remain in the heavens alone, with all power and dominion as his exclusive possession.

IV

But no men, even Moslems, can be confined within the compass of a doctrine, if the limits are too narrow for an expanding spiritual life. Such is the case in the religion of the Prophet. The real spiritual life of the religion is to be found among the mystics, who are organized in what are called Darvish orders. They are widely scattered in the Mohammedan world. This mystic longing is an expression of the desire to experience union with God, and all the exercises are calculated to produce that effect. Thus the human heart is seen to repudiate the cleavage between God and man which the Moslem orthodox theologians have asserted so vehemently. Great saints have arisen in Islam who know that they have had communion with God, and their memory is highly venerated and their graves visited by large companies of people. This phase of Islam is the key to understand the inner meaning of the religion and its vitality, for here there is life and the possibility of progress.

V

Islam is in a serious plight. She is tied fast to an obsolete theory of the universe, to religious customs and teachings which refuse to fit into the modern view of the world, to a book whose claims to originality cannot be substantiated, and to a character, the great prophet himself, who was only a man and whose deeds and ideals cannot be defended in a world of growing moral convictions. Add to this the presence of slavery and the sanction of polygamy and almost

unlimited divorce, which still obtain in all Moslem communities, and the burden must prove unbearable. Think of the indictment against Mohammed, who, because of his ungovernable jealousy, caused his own and all wives in Islam to be secluded in their own homes and behind a veil when they appeared on the streets. Women in Islam must live in another world from the men. All advantages are denied them; they live for their husbands and have little or no value as human beings fit for noble lives and companionships.

Cannot Islam change? Can she not throw off the weight of tradition and emerge into the light of modern day? It is a real question, which many have answered with a decided negative. A reformed Islam is no longer Islam, they say. But the fact is, Islam has changed much in the past and will doubtless do so in the future. Savings-banks are in direct opposition to the Koran, which forbids all interest on money, and life insurance is blasphemy in that it presumes to plan for the future, which should be left entirely in God's hands; yet savings-banks and life insurance are both making headway among the more progressive Mohammedans. Nothing can retard the march of events, not even religious conservatism, when men begin to desire better things. And men are beginning to feel new desires and are seeking to accommodate their theories to them. What the end will be no one can say, but Islam will not continue the same. But can Islam ever come to her own religiously with Mohammed in the lead? That is a question the Moslems must settle. In the meantime we who have Jesus Christ, have we any duty? That is a question we must settle.

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *What Kind of God Have We?*

What were the early ideas of the Hebrews about God? How do they differ from complete monotheism? What did Jesus add to the old conception of God? What are the most important elements in God's character?

II. *Islam as a World Force*

What is the secret of Islam's ability to make converts today? What does Islam do with a people when it has secured their allegiance? What is your judgment of Islam when compared with your ideas of what a religion should be?

III. *Islam in Theory and Practice*

Keep in mind the "five pillars" of the faith. What is good and what questionable in each? In what respects does the Allah of Islam differ from the Father-God of Christianity? What connection is there between the fatalism of Islam and the freedom of Christianity and the conceptions of God on which they rest?

("Aspects of Islam," by Dr. D. B. Macdonald, may well be used in connection with this chapter.)

CHAPTER XI

THE DREAM OF RELIGION COME TRUE

After our study of some of the living religions of mankind we come in the end to our own faith, Christianity. It is not at all strange if, in our admiration, we feel that in Christianity the dreams men have had of what religion might do have actually come true. What we should do in these last studies is to apply ourselves to discover what right we have to make such high claims. What does Christianity offer to men in seeking their allegiance? What may a man expect in his own life when he comes to Christianity and seeks its help? In all frankness, is our confidence in Christianity justified?

Daily Readings

First Day: Is there anything more in a man than we see when we meet him on the street?

> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.—Gen. 1 : 26, 27.

Made in God's own image; animated with God's own "breath of life," as we are told in the more picturesque account in the second chapter of Genesis; given dominion over all creatures; and having it said of him, as of all other parts of creation, that he was "good"—surely man had an enviable origin and an ideal relation to God, as these ancient records maintain. What do you think is meant by being made in the image of God? How far do you think man can lose or has lost this stamp of the divine nature?

SECOND DAY: But as we see men day by day, something is surely the matter. Man is out of joint with himself, with his fellows, and with God. The Bible is full of references to man's pitiable condition.

> There is none righteous, no, not one;
> There is none that understandeth,
> There is none that seeketh after God;
> They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable;
> There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one.—Rom. 3: 10-12.

The indictment is very severe—is it too severe? What would you say is man's malady? Recall the answer as stated in the form of a vivid story in the third chapter of Genesis, where the first temptation was to be disobedient to God.

THIRD DAY: Yet with all this, man possesses dignity and is prized as worthy of honor. He is still a child of God.

> When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
> The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
> What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
> And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
> For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
> And crownest him with glory and honor.—Psalm 8: 3-6.

With all his weakness and disability, man is related to God in a unique manner. What do you think is necessary to turn his possibilities into realities?

FOURTH DAY: There was a word Jesus used, one of the most wonderful in His whole vocabulary, the word "forgiveness." It was wonderful because it gathered up into itself so many great ideas, that of God's sorrow because of man's sin, of His love for the one who had gone wrong, of His purpose to bring the sinner back to Himself. We recall the scene of the boy's return home:

> And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.—Luke 15: 20-24.

One of the things this story teaches is that God is anxious, more anxious than we can tell, to reestablish the old relations of confidence and trust which had been broken, and that is what is meant by forgiveness. Christianity then, according to Jesus, is primarily a religion of restored relationships.

FIFTH DAY: Paul's letters are full of this same subject, forgiveness.

> Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.—Rom. 5: 1, 2.

"Justification" is a legal word and as such is liable to misunderstanding, but what Paul had in mind was such a change of relationship between God and man that man could feel free to go to God as a child goes to a parent. So remarkable was the change in a man who had entered into this relationship that to Paul all idea of patching up an old thing to "make it do" was excluded—the man who had been changed was like a new creature.

> Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.—II Cor. 5: 17.

SIXTH DAY: Man's moral life has been covered with blotches. He hates the thought, and wants to be able to live honorably and purely. What are his prospects?

> But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. . . . And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.—Gal. 5:16, 17, 24.

A new spirit possesses a man. Yes, but more than that is true—an influence from the outside, yet acting upon him invisibly and from the inside, makes certain things possible which otherwise he could not do at all. It is very plain, too, that he cannot lie down and take it easy. In every passage where the moral life is mentioned, the necessity of man's doing his part is shown. But when a man is honestly doing his part, his confidence may be complete.

SEVENTH DAY: Man's life lasts so short a time here below that inevitably he peers out into the future to discover, if possible, what is in store for him. He needs two things, the assurance of immortality and an immortality of such a kind as shall prove worthy of his highest ideals here in this life. We are told that it was Jesus Christ who "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Tim. 1:10), so that for a Christian all the assurance he needs is in his Lord.

> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away. . . . And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And he that sitteth on the

> throne said, Behold, I make all things new. . . . He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.—Rev. 21:1, 3-5, 7, 8.

Sum up the characteristics of the life in the new Jerusalem, the City of God. Who is to inherit all these things and enter into these relationships? We shudder at the thought of the cleavage, but what an inestimable boon it is to know that all which in any way would debase and degrade is conspicuous by its absence in that life. Only "new creatures" could enter into and appreciate such a world, and all that is there will be worthy of their highest and purest dreams. Only then will man come to his own. The secret of the blessedness of the coming experience is that Jesus Christ will be there, and in Him we shall have all.

Study for the Week

I

We have found the men of every nation religious. A universal craving after God makes some kind of religion imperative. Our object has been to exhibit the various religions in such a way that the sincere yearning of men for God might be seen in its true light. In the course of our wanderings much truth has been encountered as well as error. And truth is always truth, wherever found and by whomsoever proclaimed. It makes no difference how much of the false is mingled with it, it is God's truth nevertheless, and is to be cherished and appropriated as a priceless possession.

If there be truth in all the religions and if it is our duty to acknowledge truth wherever found, why is not an eclectic faith the only religion a truth-loving man can make his own? Why is he not in duty bound to pick out all the good points in all the religions he knows anything about and

formulate a statement which will embrace them all? In what other way can he win the reputation of being candid and fair-minded? Is not the acceptance of a single and more or less exclusive faith the stark repudiation of his sense of justice and broad-mindedness?

If religion were a matter of beliefs only, much could be said for this view. But let us look at religion more closely. Is it a matter of the head only? Is it even primarily intellectual? Some have thought so and have acted as though all that was necessary had been done when coherent beliefs arranged in systematic order had been presented. But religion must carry the whole personality or not be adequate to meet the demands made upon it. To embrace a religion is not primarily to believe certain things or to act in such and such a way, though both are essential. The first thing in religion is devotion, surrender, putting our trust in God. Of course there are beliefs on which this trust is built and practices which grow out of such a faith, but in essence religion is a matter of personal relationships.

A most excellent illustration is to be found in our Christian view of marriage and family life. The promise a man makes is exceedingly exclusive, "forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live"—exclusive to be sure, but essential if the heart is to find rest and peace. It is a condition of happiness found in the very structure of the human heart. The analogy with religion is almost exact. The human heart wants rest and peace, it is seeking an allegiance, it desires to trust, it is looking for a worthy being in whom to repose confidence. A religion in its central allegiance must be to a certain extent exclusive, because the human personality is built that way. Augustine's famous saying is quite to the point, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee."

But when this central point is seen and our confidence fixed, there is no limit to our right and duty to discover and appreciate every good thing in every religion and use it as a gift from God Himself. Our own conceptions will grow

richer and our moral perceptions sharper by the discovery of what to us might otherwise be hidden or dimly seen. God speaks in manifold ways. There is no contradiction in holding that in Christ "are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden" (Col. 2:3). It were a pity if the wisdom hidden in Christ was not so many-sided and ample that each race did not possess some element of it not discovered by others.

II

Christianity has a method of salvation which is possible of attainment. To make such a claim becomes all the more surprising when what is meant by salvation in Christianity is understood. It is far more than to be assured that certain consequences of our wrongdoings are abrogated. It is a sense of having found God and of having Him as our great Friend, on whom we may count for all we need. We were lost and could not find our way, but now the path is clear and we walk in it, and peace and gladness are ours. A very great change has taken place—a sense of trust in God has changed our whole relation to others. Our confidence is such that nothing present or in the future, in this life or the other, upsets us so that we cannot recover ourselves. The experience may be vivid or it may be in the softer colors—the important thing is that we are possessed of an assurance that things are right, and that we have good reason for this conclusion.

Running over the religions of the world, we find that all have some idea of salvation and all teach some method of attaining it. Of what good were religion if it did not claim to save? Now when all the schemes of salvation have been collected and are compared, they are seen to fall into two great classes. That is, in principle there are just two conceivable methods of securing salvation: one is to win it for oneself and the other is to receive it as a gift.

Sitting on beds of spikes, attempting to keep without infringement a set of moral rules, trying to throttle one's inclinations and desires, losing one's self in absorbed contempla-

tion, have all been used and are now in use to bring peace, to win the approval of God. Failure is written large over every one of these attempts. Something is always lacking. Our resolution breaks down somewhere and we are undone.

Christianity proclaims salvation as the free gift of God. The condition of its coming is that we shall want it and want it sufficiently to ask for it and trust God that it is ours. We call it faith; it means taking a certain risk, that God does actually do what He has promised, and then acting accordingly. Faith means devotion; a giving of oneself up to another, in this case to Jesus Christ. We call him Saviour because we are saved from our lower selves, from our fears, from the things which destroy, and we are alive to things which are true and noble and pure. Our attainment may at times be very slow, even to the point of discouragement, but so long as our attitude toward Jesus Christ is one of eager desire to win His approval and of trust in His ability to make good with His promises, we are saved.

III

The beauty of the method of salvation just spoken of is that it is open to all. Anyone can trust another if he has confidence in him. But we must go further. The moral task still stares a man in the face. It is here he has been stumbling and falling all his life. It is this that has caused him remorse and bitterness, that has broken up his peace a thousand times, and almost led him to the verge of despair. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all," and unhappy, despairing men as well. The religion which makes such claims as Christianity ought to have some good method of cracking this hard nut, or fall to the level of other religions almost bankrupt morally.

Now it will be clearly understood that Christianity does not attain its end by lessening the moral pressure. Far from it —the very opposite is true. No religion can compare with Christianity in moral strenuousness. Mohammedan morality, and Confucian, and Buddhist, compared point by point, show

the uniqueness of the Christian position. We are judged not only by our acts, but by the desires and thoughts we harbor. We are to be judged by the most rigorous of all standards, that of love. No one can hold his head up when such tests are applied. The pride of the Rich Young Ruler that he had kept all the commandments Jesus cited did not last, when Jesus probed to the heart of his indulgent selfishness. Our moral ideal constantly recedes as we make progress. It keeps ahead of us with its tantalizing demands until in desperation we wonder why we cannot reach the summit.

How can there be any peace or gladness in such a religion, a religion which is always demanding more than we can fulfil, and which promises this kind of an experience to the very end? There are two things Christianity has to say to us in this strange plight. One is the word of forgiveness. God restores the old relation of companionship for which we were intended. That is the "good news" of Christianity.

Now God could be convicted of immorality in His forgiveness, if it were bestowed on anyone who was not in the moral battle to win. Otherwise He would be implicated in wrongdoing by passing over it lightly. Not so with our God, the God revealed by Jesus Christ. But if this be true, the wonder is that foreboding and discouragement do not take possession of the Christian as he feels his weakness and looks out into the days to come with their temptations. No joy over God's forgiveness could last in such a chilly atmosphere of apprehension. What is there to do? The other word Christianity has to speak is Christ's message that He has not left us alone in the world, but has sent His Spirit everywhere among men to be their Helper. Invisible yet present and active, this Holy Spirit makes His abode in the lives of Christian men and women as a kind of moral and spiritual dynamic. He helps them to do what would otherwise be impossible.

IV

Christianity does more than this. It reveals a God who is at the same time a Father. Does that sound commonplace?

We do hear it very often these days, but do people really understand what it means when God is spoken of as Father? He is far more than father in the ordinary sense; He is father in that He was like Jesus. This revelation was made in the only manner in which men could understand it. It was made in human form, in the language men spoke. In Jesus Christ we see God come down as a man among us. He passed through a human experience among us, and we see Him in our own light and hear Him in our own tongue. In Jesus Christ we see manhood at its best; we see also God living a human life. Mr. Lloyd George was once enjoying one of his trips to his native Welsh hills and valleys. He was asked how it was he understood so well and sympathized so completely with the cottagers in the little villages. His answer was that he knew what it meant to look out at the world from the inside, through those cottage windows. In Jesus Christ God was looking out at our world from our own human cottage windows. So He understands and sympathizes with us completely because He knows, not so much by the divine and majestic attribute of omniscience, as by experience. Our God was revealed perfectly by Jesus Christ, so He is a Christ-like God.

Now this is what all the world's a-seeking—to know God. It is the deepest longing in the human breast. We may see this at a point we should scarcely think of as giving us light here. What is the real meaning of image worship, of idols? It must be based on some innate desire, some fundamental need of men. Is it not to have a God brought near? to have something tangible and visible to make God real to their minds? This is surely a worthy desire. See how Christianity meets this need fully in Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of "Christ, who is the image of God" (II Cor. 4:4), and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus, "the Son," as "the very image of his substance" (Heb. 1:3). Yes, men want to know God in a manner and form they can understand. They *will* have an image. The one essential of an image is that it worthily and adequately represent its object, and

here all man-made idols fall down. Is God such as they have pictured? If so, what a God He must be! No wonder the non-Christian religions are inadequate. But in Jesus Christ we have a perfect image of the one loving God, and when we see Him we see God as He is.

V

Christianity points to a cross, which symbolizes its victory over the world's suffering and sin. It is the preaching of the cross that breaks the heart of stone. Sin and suffering are everywhere. And a religion making universal claims must qualify here, or be out of the running. We live not in an ideal world, full of beauty and goodness, but in a disordered world, full of misgiving and malice and sorrow.

We might debate how much of the suffering in the world is the result of wrongdoing, and come to different conclusions. But since things are as they are, a religion is bound to deal with sin, and do it in such a way as to give men hope. Until we begin to see the problem as God does, we cannot appreciate the meaning of that feature of Christianity which down through the Christian ages has been its chief basis of appeal.

The life and death of Jesus Christ and His rising again was God's response to man's need. Jesus Christ suffered and died; He sounded to the depth the meaning of human suffering and sin. Is there any wonder He could say as He did, with this whole experience in view, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16: 33)? He had passed through and was victorious. The assurance of all for which we strive lies in the power of the living Christ, who went to the bottom of the pit and rose again the victor.

The great barrier between God and man was the fact that man had sinned. Sin is like dust in the eyes, it cuts off our view. Man lost sight of God and became a wanderer in the world. Everything was askew because God and man were not friends. With all their attempts, the great religious leaders of the world could not bring about the kind of contact which would seal a friendship. This Jesus did.

It is in Christ's death on the cross that we arrive at the heart of the reconciliation. Sin was so terrible that Jesus died—not in the ordinary sense, for He *gave* up his life. There was purpose and meaning in it for Him and, if we will, for us. If sin was so terrible that it was necessary for Christ to give up His very life, how great must have been the love of God in sending His Son for this very purpose! If sin was so terrible, what a necessity rested upon God to make it appear dreadful by such a sacrifice, in order to save His forgiveness of sin from becoming cheap! How much farther Christianity penetrates to the inner meaning of the world's malady than any other religion! What other religion can burst out in praise like this: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15: 55-57).

VI

Such a religion is universal—not because Jesus Christ issued a command to carry His Gospel to the ends of the earth, but because it fits the needs of men. It is all summed up in the life and character of Jesus Christ—our religion is essentially what its name indicates, the religion of Christ, Christianity. Paradoxical as it may seem, the only way to make democracy safe is to make Jesus King in the hearts of men. He is the world's only hope, because He is the only figure who looms up larger than Confucius or Buddha or Moses or Mohammed. None greater than they have lived, yet how full of mistakes and failures! Yet here is Jesus, immaculate in His purity and stainless in all His deeds.

Thou alone, Oh "Crystal Christ," art worthy to lead all the world's noblest.

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *The Bible and Man*

Try to formulate all the biblical passages have to say

about man. In what respects is he to be blamed for his present condition? What kind of a start did he have? What is his hope?

II. *Religions True and Incomplete*

What does the presence of truth in all religions indicate? What is the central fact about a religion, the fact that determines its position? Why cannot we succeed in making a religion out of all the true things in all religions?

III. *The Appeal of Christianity*

What is there which is attractive about the Christian method of being saved? How is salvation attempted in other religions? How can a man who wants to live the Christian life look forward with joy, when he knows he is weak and has so often failed before? How does Christianity deal with the problem caused by sin? What makes such a religion as Christianity essentially universal?

(Among many books, such a volume as "The Main Points," by Dr. Charles Reynolds Brown, will be found most stimulating.)

CHAPTER XII

WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?

The world has had, as we have discovered, a number of great religious leaders. We have studied Mohammed, and Confucius, and Gautama Buddha. What is the place of Jesus Christ among the religious geniuses of the world? Is He one among many, is He to be classified with others even though with the distinction of being easily first, or has He a unique place which He alone occupies? What do the records tell about Him? What did He say about Himself? What impression did He make upon His immediate followers? What has been accomplished by the religion He founded? What is His place today?

Daily Readings

First Day: The way was not unprepared for Jesus. Had not certain of the Old Testament prophets spoken of a "coming one," a Messiah, who would be the Deliverer? They had not labored in vain. There was a sense of expectancy, the looked-for Messiah would surely come soon.

> And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.—Luke 3: 15-17.

John introduced Jesus to the Jewish people; his word was, this one, this very man Jesus, is He who is to fulfil the expectations aroused by the prophets.

SECOND DAY: Two aspects of the life and work of Christ are to be presented today.

> And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to the Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? And when the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.—Luke 7: 19-23.

Has civilization ever entered into the meaning of such a program? Yet it was the program of Jesus.

> At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.—Matt. 11: 25-30.

Jesus knew God His Father. Has anyone ever claimed to share such knowledge with Jesus? How could Jesus know God so intimately?

THIRD DAY: Jesus was a teacher. He spoke words out of a heart of sympathy and understanding. He attracted men and women and children by His gentleness and consideration.

> And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth.—Luke 4:22.
>
> The common people heard him gladly.—Mark 12:37.

More than that, Jesus spoke with authority.

> And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.—Matt. 7:28, 29.

The people who heard his words knew by an unerring instinct that Jesus had the right to teach and to command.

FOURTH DAY: The authority Jesus possessed and exercised was founded on something within Himself. Jesus passed through the same experience of temptation as we do.

> For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.—Heb. 2:18.
>
> For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.—Heb. 4:15, 16.

Is there any power which is to be compared with the power to meet all temptation triumphantly? Jesus throws

out this startling challenge, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8: 46). Jesus had no consciousness of sin, yet His moral sensitiveness surpassed that of any of the sons of men. He was like us, yet what a gulf lies between Him and ourselves!

FIFTH DAY: Jesus not only lived a unique life; He died, and in the estimate of His followers a unique significance attaches to His death. Then He rose from the dead and appeared again to His disciples.

> For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also.—I Cor. 15: 3-8.

This was the Gospel of the early Church—"so we preach and so ye believed." Is there any wonder that Easter stands out as the most significant of all the days of the Christian year?

SIXTH DAY: Not only were the disciples convinced that Jesus was alive, and "alive for evermore"; they were also conscious of His continued activity. He was present with them though unseen, doing His characteristic work.

> Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is

> of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.—Phil. 3:7-11.

Here we have the testimony of Paul, who had met Jesus first on the road to Damascus.

> Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. —I Peter 1:8, 9.

This was the experience of the vacillating Peter, who had become rock-like. And what shall we say of the same Lord Jesus, when men and women around us are finding the same things true of themselves?

SEVENTH DAY: Jesus, then, was Saviour as well as Risen Lord. The writers of the New Testament went even further.

> Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell.—Col. 1:13-19.

Think of some of these phrases, "the image of the invisible God," "all things have been created through him, and unto him," "in all things he might have the preeminence," "in him should all the fulness dwell." Jesus made such an impression on His followers that in sheer honesty they were compelled to make some change in their idea of God Himself. The best they could say about God, now that they had seen Jesus, was that God must be like Him. They went even a step further and linked Jesus with God so intimately in their thought and in their language that they found themselves treating Jesus just as they did God Himself.

Study for the Week

I

Christianity is the religion of Christ. The most superficial glance over the churches which call themselves Christian reveals one fact, that they are one in loyalty to Jesus Christ.

In their common loyalty to Jesus Christ all these bodies, Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant, have certain features in common. Their practice and worship vary greatly, but still give evidence of a common origin. Worship and praise are offered to Jesus Christ by all alike. Each is jealous of its loyalty to Him and would scout the suggestion that any practice or belief is out of harmony with His will and purpose. The same Bible is looked upon as containing an authoritative deposit of faith and practice. Two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, have been preserved by all, save a few small Protestant bodies.

In belief the likeness is even more striking. Certain primitive doctrines are accepted by all. All have held during the centuries to belief in God and in His existence in a Trinity, and all have strenuously defended the reality of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. All have continued to believe in a special significance as attaching to His death and His resurrection. Forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in His name. The presence of the Holy Spirit guiding and giving strength

to men and leading the Church in its course is a doctrine maintained wherever Christians are to be found. With all their differences and their inability to unite, the truth seems to be that Christianity is not so seriously divided either in belief or practice as other great religions, like Islam and Buddhism.

II

The most significant historical and geographical fact relative to Christianity is that more than any other faith it has justified its claim to be a world religion. It is found literally the world over. Jesus Christ was a Jew and He built His religion on a Semitic foundation. His immediate followers were all Jews and their early preaching was at first exclusively to members of their own race. Paul, the "apostle to the Gentiles," was the first who saw with eye undimmed the universal outlook of his Master, Jesus Christ, and succeeded in carrying the great majority of the Church with him in breaking down all the barriers between Jew and Gentile in the new Church. With Paul Christianity started on its career as the religion of the peoples of Europe. These peoples were conquered by the new religion, so that from an early day the prevailing features of Christianity have been European and not Semitic and Asiatic.

The story would be a long one, were we to recount the whole history of the conquest of the European races by Christianity. Two great stages mark the course of the advance. The first may be said to extend from the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached the first evangelistic Christian sermon in Jerusalem, to the Council of Nicea in 325, when, under summons of the Emperor Constantine, who had accepted the once despised Cross of Jesus Christ as his emblem, the first great Christian council met to unify Christian belief and practice, as the Emperor had just succeeded in uniting the Empire politically. In large districts of the eastern part of the Empire, notably the whole of Asia Minor, Christianity was the dominant religion. In other places the

new faith was not so strong, but in every place it was the growing, enthusiastic faith. The future was hers. In ways unknown by us today little churches had been started in every part of the Mediterranean littoral and even as far away as distant Britain. The significance of Constantine's act in making Christianity the officially recognized religion of the Empire lies in the fact that he was keen enough to see what the actual conditions were, that the only hope of his uniting a divided Empire was to make use of the single force which was an effective bond of union. Christianity was found everywhere and the Christians were bound together in a brotherhood as strong as bands of steel.

III

What was the secret of this remarkable achievement? The most famous answer is the five-fold summary of Edward Gibbon: "I. The inflexible and . . . intolerant zeal of the Christians. . . . II. The doctrine of a future life. . . . III. The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive Church. IV. The pure and austere morals of the Christians. V. The union and discipline of the Christian republic." But were we to have talked with one of those early Christians, a very different story would have been told. Jesus would be the burden of his message—had He not spoken peace to his soul? Had He not saved him from the evil life which had been his? Had He not brought happiness and unselfish consideration into his dealings with his wife and children? Did He not hold out to him the promise of eternal life when this short life was ended? Listen to the words of the venerable Polycarp before the tribunal, when asked to deny his Lord and thus save himself from the lions, "Fourscore and six years have I been serving Him, and He hath done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme the King who saved me?" When all the facts are taken into view, the truer account of the success of the Christian Church during these three hundred years would be to say that the presence of the living Christ

in the hearts of His people made possible what otherwise would be entirely unintelligible. There was a new power in the world. Not merely a new doctrine to teach, nor a new rule of life to practice, but a living Person energizing all their thoughts and actions, was transforming the world before their eyes.

Is there any wonder, then, that during all these formative years the Church was continually asking itself, "What manner of man is this?" This Jesus now living within them and filling them with a glory they had never thought possible among men, this Jesus, whose life and teaching and death and resurrection are given in the gospels and interpreted in the letters of their beloved apostles, could be no ordinary being. They worked at the problem with all their intellectual and moral and spiritual powers. No human analogies were capable of expressing what Jesus Christ meant to them, and yet they must be able to tell of His wonders and His grace. And so they made definitions and formed creeds. Many, in attempting to simplify and make more clear their meaning, fell below what the main body of the Church thought adequate. They were dealt with roughly at times, far too roughly in our estimation. Many centuries were to pass before men learned the lesson of Christian tolerance. The Church in this early day was deeply exercised over the honor to be paid to Christ. They looked upon it as a matter of life and death. All they had came from Him. He was registering His presence in their lives every day, and they must give Him the honor which His deeds in their lives and in the Church demanded. Nothing less than His preeminence would satisfy them. Their experience led them to fall down before Jesus with the exclamation of the apostle Thomas, "My Lord and My God."

IV

The second stage of the Christian conquest of the European people falls in the Middle Ages. The feat accomplished by the Christian Church during these centuries was the winning of

northern Europe to the Church. When the period opened, the center of European civilization was on the shores of the Mediterranean; when it closed, the scene had shifted to the North. The gift of Christianity to northern Europe was not only a new and satisfying religion, but civilization itself. The history of northern Europe virtually begins with the coming of the religion of Christ.

A very different picture presents itself in this period from that in the old Empire, when the early Church was making its influence felt. Christianity, in a way not true in the old day, is dominated by the Church. Did we say that men were won to Christ in the days of the Empire? It would be truer of the Middle Ages to say that they were won to the Church. Not that Christ had been forgotten, but that, as His representative on earth, the Church of Christ obscured to a greater or less degree the vision of the Christ Himself. Men were more anxious to obey the behests of the Church than to listen to the voice of Christ within and to study the tale of His life as found in the simplicity of the gospel story. Unsurpassed heroism was manifested by a thousand devoted missionaries, whose relation to Christ in many cases was beautiful to behold. But with it all the presence of a dominant Church made a great difference. Nominal conversions, formalism, insistence on outward conformity took the place of vital contact with the living Christ in so many cases that they became characteristic of the period. Add to this the use of coercion to force unwilling peoples into the Church and the tale of an unfortunate period is complete. Northern Europe was won, won to the Church and to at least a nominal acceptance of the teachings of Christianity, but much was left to be desired.

V

Is there any wonder a Reformation was needed? Christianity languished and was well-nigh sick unto death, when the great change came in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, under the leadership of Martin Luther.

What was the great religious significance of this upheaval, under whose influence we still live? Again it is concerned with the great center of the Christian faith, Christ Himself—not now to settle the question of His dignity and the honor which is His due, but to secure the access to Him which the human soul demands. The Christ was a living Christ, to be sure, but the Church stood between the individual believer and his Saviour. Forgiveness could come only through priestly absolution. The Church was the necessary channel of communion between the believer and Christ. Now the gist of the Reformation is that any human being may have immediate contact with the living Christ, irrespective of church or creed or ceremony or priest. Protestantism has stood for this one vital thing. It has considered it a matter of life and death to keep the channel of communication between Christ and the believer securely open and unobstructed.

So earnest have Protestants been to protect the rights of the individual believer, to see to it that no authoritative hierarchy or assembly dominate the life and prevent the free movement of the human soul in its approach to Christ, that all kinds of splits have taken place. No matter how small the difference, a new church must be formed to give expression to the particular truth which had been discovered. So far has this been carried that all earnest minds in our day are turning in the opposite direction, and seeking ways and means by which lesser differences can be laid aside or placed in their rightful place of unimportance. By emphasizing the points of likeness, the day is being looked for when there may be a return to greater unity than now exists. To this end every Christian should work and pray. Is it not in line with our Lord's thought when He prayed that all His followers might be one?

VI

Since the Reformation, and in these latter days, Christianity is proving in a more marked degree than ever before its universal claims. The missionaries of the Cross of Christ

have gone to all lands and have established the Church among all peoples. Mohammedans have been converted, as have high caste Hindus, Chinese literati, and patriotic Japanese. No other classes are more antagonistic to the gospel message than these, yet representatives of all have kneeled down to do homage to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. In many lands and in divers tongues the name of Jesus is sung by children and His power to save proclaimed by men and women, whose first ray of light in the midst of heathen darkness came from the story of His love and sacrifice.

The seedtime lasted long and is not yet complete, the first fruits have appeared in nearly every land, and now rich rewards are appearing. Nothing fills the heart of the Christian with more joy and confidence for the future than the spirit of unity which fills the breasts of those who have been won to Jesus Christ. With comparatively little interest in the differences which have kept believers apart in Europe and America, they are asking with increasing emphasis why they should be kept apart when they feel that they are brothers together. Do they not sing and pray together and work and live together? Why then should they be kept apart? It is a wonderful testimony they bear to the unity of believers in Christ, untouched by the influences which have kept the churches in Christendom apart.

VII

Finally, what manner of man is this that such results have flowed from the preaching of His name? His word has proved to be true in actual practice, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Christianity means many things in theory and practice, but all that is truly and necessarily Christian may be summed up in one word, Christ. Christ is the living center of His own religion and is the standard by which everything must be judged. All else takes on value as it finds some place of usefulness in relation to Him. In a very true sense Christianity is Christ. And just as clearly as men heard His voice

on the Galilean hills they may hear His summons today. He would woo them to Himself so that they might feel the warmth of His love and catch the fervor of His spirit. He would send them out into a wild and fear-tossed world with His word of courage and kindness and power. This is the message of the Christ. Do we hear? Do we heed?

Suggestions for Thought and Discussion

I. *Jesus Christ in the Bible*

What expectations did the Old Testament create in anticipation of the coming of a Messiah, a Deliverer? Why were the Jews disappointed when Jesus appeared? What differentiates Jesus from other characters? What was the source of His inspiration and authority? What do we mean when we say that Jesus is alive today? How do we know it?

II. *Jesus Christ in Human History*

Trace the course of Christian history to see how the knowledge of Jesus has been carried to the ends of the earth. What is the secret of this expansion? Does it shed any light on the kind of person Jesus is? Why did the Church attempt to formulate a doctrine about Jesus Christ? Why are we trying to do the same thing today?

III. *Jesus Christ and the World's Need*

What may we hope Jesus may be able to do in the world today in view of the story of the past? What is the part men must play to make His work effective? What connection is there between the unity of the Church and its work in the world? How best can we honor Jesus Christ?

("The Jesus of History," by Prof. T. R. Glover, will help the discussion of this chapter greatly.)

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